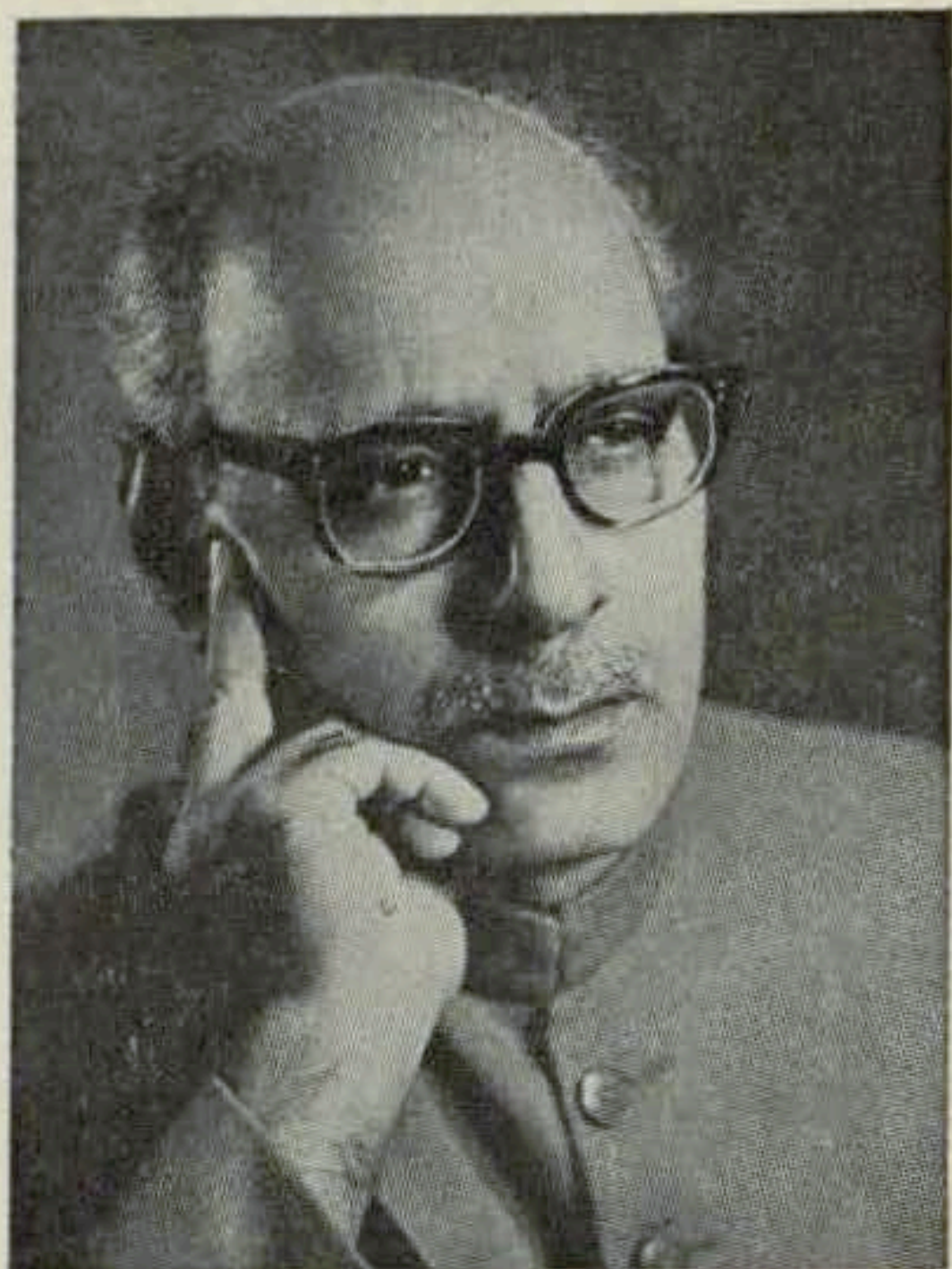
ISLAM: A CHALLENGE TO RELIGION

G. A. PARWEZ

Chaudhri Ghulam Ahmad Parwez originally belongs to Batala, a town now in the Punjab province of India, but at one time a very prominent seat of Islamic learning, philosophy and culture. Born in 1903, Mr. Parwez studied the Qur'ān and the classics of Islam under the guidance of his grandfather—a celebrated scholar and eminent *Sufi*. At an early age, he acquired a thorough understanding of the traditions, beliefs and practices of conventional Islam, including the once widespread discipline of *Tasawwuf* (Muslim mysticism), along with its arduous practical course of esoteric meditation and solitary "spiritual" exercises.

This thorough grounding in the entire system of ideas which has traditionally gone under the name of religion in Muslim society, formed the basis of Mr. Parwez's critical study, in the all-pervading light of the Holy Qur'ān, of not only the history of Islam and of Muslims, of the beliefs and practices of pre-Islamic religions of humanity, but of the total area of human thought and socio-ideological movements throughout the ages. The result of this critical study is a tremendous re-evaluation of values forefigured in the philosophical work of Allama Iqbal, and especially in his penetrating insight regarding the nature of Islam as "a protest against all religions in the old sense of the term." Iqbal was not vouchsafed the time to develop this exhilarating and revolutionary thesis in the work which he proposed to write as an "Introduction to the study of Islam," but he had definitely upheld the necessity, in an atmosphere of bitter sectarian conflicts which raged in the world of Islam during his lifetime, of tearing off "the hard crust" of centuries old impress of pre-Islamic superstitions of Muslim nations "which had immobilised an essentially dynamic outlook on life . . . to re-discover the original verities of freedom, equality and solidarity with a view to rebuild our moral, social and political ideals out of their original simplicity and universality."

Mr. Parwez's immense philosophical work is a realisation of Iqbal's desire to study Islam not as a religion but as a *Dīn*—a word which has no parallel in Western languages, and an exposition of whose meaning forms the core of the present work as well as his numerous books, treatises, lectures and discourses, of his fascinating exposition of the Qur'ān (in thirty parts) and his modern Qur'ānic Lexicon (in four volumes). His revolutionary writings and discourses have inspired a widespread critical movement in Pakistan among the intelligentsia as well as the

(*Continued*)

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Islam: A Challenge To Religion

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I am greatly indebted to a number of my friends and students who undertook voluntarily the thankless task of getting this book through the press, and performed it with the utmost care and efficiency. I cordially wished to thank them one by one by name, but there is a deep feeling which restrains me from doing so. They being lovers of Qur'ān and devotees of the noble mission of delivering its message to humanity, would not like such a publicity, and would at once say :

(We have done this) for the good will of Allah, and desire no reward from you nor thanks (79 : 9).

Their feeling deserves respect and should, therefore, have preference over that of mine.

I gratefully acknowledge the help and co-operation I received from Zarreen Art Press, Lahore, which took special care and interest in printing this work.

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September, 1968

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INTRODUCTION

THE history of mankind makes tragic reading. Down through the ages we come across a series of sequences of the rise, growth, decline and fall not only of nations but even of their civilisations and cultures. No doubt, man has all along shown a remarkable constructive genius, having attained many an awe-inspiring success, now and then, despite occasional set-backs and natural catastrophes. But his constructive genius was always undermined by some inherent weakness underlying his ideals or his way of life which ultimately brought about a disastrous end to his efforts. Nevertheless, there have been some notable exceptions in the series of sequences when the idea of the universal welfare of mankind took practical shape, but the main characteristic of the type of the society in all those civilisations, however, always remained one of frustration.

The same dismal spectacle is repeated age after age. We see a people incessantly striving towards the creation of a great civilisation, which became the focus of their desires and ambitions, hopes and aspirations. They looked upon their success as the apogee of human endeavour. This civilisation, they hoped, would finally liberate mankind from the clutches of tyranny and slavedom, and usher in an era of eternal peace, security and contentment. They remained lost in the illusion of having built up an unparalleled civilisation whose growth was always a source of pride and happiness for them. Every step they took for its progress kindled a new ray of hope in their hearts for ultimately attaining human welfare and advancement. But the process never reached the desired culmination, and the main objective ever remained a mirage. Long before the goal was reached, invariably an anti-climax set in and man himself became instrumental in pulling down

the imposing edifice that he had raised through the ages, shattering all his hopes, ideals and aspirations.

History is replete with such stories of the rise and growth and the ultimate decline and fall of several human civilisations. Ancient Babylon, Egypt, Greece, Iran, Rome, India and even some parts of the New World are now graveyards of glorious old civilisations. These stand as living testimony to the story of man's tragic failures. They induce a thoughtful mood in sensitive spectators and caution them to pause for a while and reflect over this warning of the Qur'ān:

> Mind! Be ye not like the old woman who laboured hard to spin her yarn and then pulled it to pieces (16 : 92).

Contemporary Civilisation

On the other hand, let us ponder over the state of the contemporary world in which the leading role is played by the nations of the West. The splendour and brilliance of that civilisation is indeed dazzling. No doubt, this civilisation, prosperous and powerful as it claims to be, has enabled man to harness some of the most formidable forces of nature. The astounding progress of communication by land, sea and air has brought distant places into close contact. Never before in his long and chequered history has man enjoyed such power over the universe and the mighty forces of nature as he does today.

This fantastic phase of human civilisation is hardly a century old, but unfortunately, as in the past, the portents of its collapse and ruin are already in evidence, as Mason says:

> We began our era of scientific efficiency confident that materialistic triumphs would solve life's problems. We are finding we were wrong. Life is not as simple as that.[1]

Every thinking man is oppressed by the fear that this civilisation which has already been shaken to its very foundations by two global wars will not survive a third shock. Not only will the whole edifice collapse, but it

will also crush the whole of mankind under it, perhaps, totally out of existence.

Why should this be so? Neither ancient civilisations nor the present one are the work of thoughtless men. In fact, all great civilisations, both past and present, are the manifestations of a highly developed creative mind. This paradox of progress leads all thoughtful minds inescapably to the conclusion arrived at by Einstein:

> By painful experience we have learnt that rational thinking does not suffice to solve the problems of our social life. Penetrating research and keen scientific work have often had tragic implications for mankind, producing, on the one hand, inventions which liberated man from exhausting physical labor, making his life easier and richer; but on the other hand, introducing a grave restlessness into his life, making him a slave to his technological environment, and—most catastrophic of all—creating the means for his own mass destruction. This, indeed, is a tragedy of overwhelming poignancy.[2]

In other words, human reason can subdue the forces of nature but cannot find by itself a satisfactory solution to the complexity of the problems of mankind. In fact, these cannot be solved unless and until we first find satisfactory answers to certain fundamental questions: What is the aim and purpose of human life? Why are the claims of different individuals and interests of different nations often mutually contradictory, and how can they be reconciled? What things are conducive and which harmful to the interests of mankind at large? What are the common values of humanity and how are they mutually related? Why is it necessary to protect and preserve these values and how? What are the fundamental rights of man and how can they be safeguarded? It is clear that human reason and its manifestations—the sciences—do not and cannot possibly help us to solve these questions. Let me again refer to Einstein:

> For science can only ascertain what is, but not what should be, and outside of its domain value judgments of all kinds remain necessary. . . . Representatives of science have often made an attempt to arrive at fundamental judgments with respect of values and ends on the basis of scientific methods and in this way have set themselves in opposition to religion. These conflicts have all sprung from fatal errors. . . .

For the scientist, there is only "being," but not wishing, no valuing, no good, no evil, no goal.[3]

Since the solution of man's fundamental problems depends upon satisfactory answers to the above questions and since human reason alone cannot properly answer them, it should be well to investigate some other source of knowledge to which we may turn for the right answers which might help mankind in solving its fundamental problems.

Divine Guidance

Human intellect helps us little in the matter, because it is not aware of any source of knowledge other than itself. There is only one guide left for mankind in this difficult quest; and that confidently proclaims its ability to lead them to their goal:

The God that has created all the objects in the universe has also undertaken to make them aware of their goal and guide them towards it (The Qur'ān, 20 : 50).

This Guidance which comes direct from God is known as revelation. It has been revealed all along to mankind through the agency of various *Anbiya*. But unfortunately, due to the ravages of time and human tamperings with the texts of the Scriptures, the messages delivered by the pre-Islamic *Anbiya* could not be preserved long in their original form. Eventually, about fourteen centuries ago, the complete and final version of that Guidance was revealed to mankind through Muḥammad (P), the last of the series of the *Rusul*. This version of the Divine Guidance is embodied, exactly in its original form, in the Qur'ān.

The Qur'ān

The Qur'ān was revealed from time to time over a period of about twenty-three years. *Rasūl-ullah* had made fool-proof arrangements for its transcription and preservation, and before he died it had been fully compiled in the form of a book, apart from being memorised by

heart by thousands of men. The Book has thus been inherited in its original form and it is an historically established fact that not a single letter of the Book has been altered in the course of the fourteen centuries of its existence. This great and incomparable Book is a unique testament of the eternal truths and ever-abiding universal values, and offers enlightenment and perfect guidance in regard to all aspects of human life.

Writings of men are the products of their environment and are designed to convey some idea and serve one or another limited purpose. The life of such writings is, therefore, transitory, and their interest and utility limited. On the other hand, a book that carries revealed guidance forever is independent of time and space and circumstance. Its teachings are never out of date, and there is no limit beyond which it could fail to enlighten and guide men. It indicates the principles that determine the development and the realisation of individual potentialities, and explains the laws that govern the rise, decline and fall of nations. The Qur'ān thus is a Divine Book embodying all these attributes, and, being the final code of life forever prescribed by God for mankind, it is fully comprehensive and complete in every respect.

This great work of Almighty God tells us that all the failures and frustrations of mankind, all the destructions and bloodshed that the world has suffered, can be traced back to fallacious views of life that man had adopted through the distorted vision and perverse thinking. One of these is the materialistic concept of life according to which man is merely the most developed specimen of animal life, his being depending entirely upon his physical body for existence and ending with its decay. Human life, they think, is governed entirely by physical laws. The preservation and promotion of man's material welfare is the only aim worth striving for. It is the function of human intellect to help man in achieving these aims. Those who believe in this view of life inevitably accept the supremacy of the law of jungle that might is right. This law naturally results in strife and conflict among

individuals and groups, eventually leading to global conflicts and mass destruction of life and property and tragic human sufferings. In short, all the courses that mankind has adopted for the organisation of social life have ultimately led, not to security and peace, but to mutual destruction. In *The Making of Humanity*, Robert Briffault has brought the root cause of the trouble clearly into focus when he says:

> No system of human organisation that is false in its very principle, in its very foundation, can save itself by any amount of cleverness and efficiency in the means by which that falsehood is carried out and maintained, by any amount of superficial adjustment and tinkering (p. 159).

The Qur'ānic View of Life

The Qur'ān, on the other hand, holds that man is not merely a physical being but is composed of something else besides his body, which is called human personality. This personality, however, is not inherited by man in a fully developed state; it exists in a latent form and its development is the ultimate object of human life. When properly developed, the life of the individual becomes capable of evolving into higher forms after its end in this mortal world. The growth of an individual's physical existence is governed by certain natural laws; but the development of his personality is subject to a different set of laws which have been given to mankind from time to time through Divine Revelation, and are now fully embodied in the Qur'ān.

Organisation of Human Society

The personality of the individual can grow and fulfil its destiny in and through society alone and not in isolation. Therefore, the Qur'ānic laws relating to human personality also outline the principles on which the organisation of human society should be based. A social system evolved in accordance with the Qur'ānic laws aims at ensuring the progress and full development of entire

mankind. It creates a society free from the clash of interests among individuals and nations. For, according to its basic principles, the personality of an individual grows in direct proportion to his contribution towards the development of other personalities. Thus in a society where each individual does his best to help others (in the interest of his own personality) conflict among individuals does not arise. And once the conflict of interests among people is eliminated, all other complications that have been responsible for the perpetual strife, tyranny and disorder in the world would automatically disappear. The Qur'ān, therefore, lays down a pattern according to which a healthy social organisation for entire mankind can be formed.

As an outcome of the materialistic concept of life, mankind today faces a crisis which perhaps has no parallel in history. This crisis, pervading all spheres of human life, has taken the form of a universal revolt against religion. This is not confined to any particular place or group of people. It is not directed against any particular religion, but against religion itself. No doubt, every religion has been subjected to the severest criticism at one time or another since the advent of civilisation, but a total revolt against religion itself is a peculiar feature of the contemporary attitude towards life. "All living religions," says William Ernest Hocking, "are wretched vessels. They are all wrapped in sanctimony, dusty-eyed with self-satisfaction, stiff-jointed with the rheum-rust of their creedal conceits, so timorous under the whips of conformity that only a few dare the perilous task of *thinking*."[4] Russell is more clear on the point when he says:

> Religion prevents our children from having a rational education; religion prevents us from removing the fundamental causes of war; religion prevents us from teaching the ethic of scientific co-operation in place of the old fierce doctrines of sin and punishment. It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age; but, if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door, and this dragon is religion.[5]

Our age thus poses an open challenge to religion.

This challenge is not entirely unprecedented. Fourteen centuries ago religion faced a similar challenge—and a formidable one at that. This challenge was held out by the Qur'ān. It openly challenged the religions of the day: Judaism, Christianity, Manichaeism, idol-worship, star-worship, nature-worship and superstition. What is more, it not merely challenged the truth and validity of the elements of a particular form of religion, but also emphasised that "religion" itself was based on false foundations.

This assertion is likely to cause surprise not only to non-Muslims but even to Muslims. It may be argued that Islam itself is a religion (and the Qur'ān is a book of religion) and to say that the Qur'ān is the standard-bearer of a revolt against religion is a contradiction in terms. In fact, however, this is not a contradiction but may merely be termed as a paradox, which arises from a fundamental fallacy and a widely accepted misconception about the nature of Islam. Islam is generally regarded as a religion (*madhhab*) whereas in fact it is not a *madhhab* but a *dīn*. Now *madhhab* and *dīn*, which are generally treated as synonymous, are not only essentially different concepts but are mutually contradictory. So, the fundamental difference between the two must be clearly understood before the assertion made above can be properly appreciated. A proper understanding of this difference is also essential for the deliverance of mankind from the deadly crisis in which it finds itself today.

The Qur'ān tells us that when man began to live in groups, a clash of interests ensued. And this in turn led to violent strife and bloodshed. Since this mess had been the result of man's own limitations, it was beyond his power to remedy it. What was needed was a clear guidance from a source supra-human. Obviously, this source could be none other than Divine Knowledge, for, in the entire universe there is no body or force superior to man except his Creator—God Himself. The Divine Guidance that mankind needed to pull itself out of the morass in which it found itself was available to it through *Rusul* (the Messengers of God).

Thus from time to time each of this long succession of Divine Messengers (*Rusul*) came to mankind with a Code of Divine Guidance, and established a socio-economic order based on the permanent values embodied in that Code. The old conflicts and strifes in that society were thus brought to an end. The pursuit of individual self-interests was replaced by the ideal of the good of the society at large. Oppression and exploitation were abolished and justice and equity prevailed. The dependence of man upon man and the subjection of one to another was brought to an end. Every individual was assured the proper satisfaction of his needs. He was, therefore, satisfied and did not owe obedience to any person or power except the Divine Laws (or the Permanent Values enshrined in the Divine Code). All the members of society thus enjoyed true freedom and security; security and freedom not confined to man's physical existence on this earth alone but also ensured in the life Hereafter. This way of life, this code of law, this social order was known as *dīn*.

This social order prevailed during the lifetime of the *Nabi* who founded it and for some time thereafter. But sooner or later, the forces suppressed by *dīn* again raised their ugly heads and began to undermine it, reviving the old evils of injustice, exploitation and tyranny. In their attempt to re-establish the old order, these forces generally availed themselves of the services of men who appeared in the robes of piety and spoke in the name of God. They posed as the interpreters of God's Will and thus distorted the principles and tenets of *dīn* which no longer remained a living force in society and was reduced to a set of soulless beliefs and lifeless dogmas and formal rituals divorced from reason and knowledge and the realities of life in this world. They sought to keep the common people entangled in the labyrinth of dogma and ritual, and the exploiters, religious as well as temporal, were thus left free to maintain their stranglehold upon the defrauded masses and to fatten themselves on the labour of others. This was the metamorphosis of *dīn* into *madhhab* or religion, as in the old.

But this sort of order, or lack of order, could not continue indefinitely, and before long another *Rasūl* (Messenger of God) appeared on the scene, challenged the standard-bearers of "religion" and eventually re-established the *dīn* or the way of life revealed to and established by his predecessor.

This process of thesis and antithesis, of revival and decadence, went on for ages and ended with the *Nabi* of Islam, through whom a perfect code of Divine Guidance embodied in the Qur'ān was brought to mankind. The social order that was established by this *Nabi* on the basis of that Code was the culmination of the process of the perfection of *dīn*.

The entire history of mankind is in short the history of a perpetual conflict between *dīn* and *madhhab* terminating in the success of one over the other.

The concept of "religion" is a deliberate creation of the minds of men devoted to the pursuit of self-interest. Their aim was to enjoy themselves at the expense of others. As a result of a sustained process of indoctrination, the masses learnt to hail and bless those who cheated them in diverse forms of disguises pleasing to them.

In all their attempts to befool the people and cheat them out of their rights, the standard-bearers of "religion" have always relied mainly upon one technique: they attributed their own aims and ambitions as emanating from the "Will of God." This is the secret of the strong hold of "religion" on the minds of the masses; and the most effective way of maintaining this hold is to keep the people ignorant, to cripple their reason and render them incapable of independent thinking, and hold up ignorance and stupidity and blind submission as signs of piety and godliness. The leaders of "religion" would have us believe that the more obscurely and incoherently a person talks, the nearer he is to God; and the more irrational and unscientific he is in his attitude and approach, the greater the esteem in which he should be held.

The only argument that is advanced in support of "religion" is that it was followed by their ancestors which vouchsafes sanctity. If anyone has the temerity to question any religious belief or practice, the leaders of "religion" try to arouse the ire of the people against him by accusing him of desecration and insult to their renowned ancestors. Fear of popular wrath has been used quite effectively by the leaders of "religion" to muzzle their critics and hold them in perpetual awe. It was to undo and break this vicious grip of *madhhab*, and to restore *dīn* as an effective Code of Guidance that God sent His *Rusul* (Messengers) amongst men from time to time.

Since falsehood has no legs to stand upon, it always appears in the garb of truth. Similarly, "religion" secures acceptance by masquerading as *dīn*, making use of its terminology and paraphernalia. It lacks the soul and spirit of *dīn* but seeks to deceive people into accepting the shadow for the substance. *Madhhab* is in fact the embalmed corpse of *dīn*. How surprisingly firm is the hold of religion on man's subconscious can be gauged by a simple fact. Christianity invented the theory of Original Sin with the result that man was bereft of free will and reduced to the state of an inanimate determined object, inasmuch as, when it was held that every human child sees the light of day at birth tainted with sin for no fault of his own, and which it was not possible for him to get rid of through his efforts, he became quite a helpless creature. The logical conclusion of this belief was that he could not be held responsible for his misdoings. Determinism and freedom from responsibility, therefore, became the natural products of Christianity.

Several men of science and thinkers in the West have, in the light of reason, renounced Christianity altogether. They went even to the length of regarding belief in God as mere absurdity; and have turned confirmed atheists and materialists. Nevertheless, it is surprising to note how deeply ingrained have been the basic concepts of Christianity in their minds. The researches they have carried out in various fields of natural sciences, sociology, history,

psychology, etc., postulate one thing alone, viz., man's complete helplessness and freedom from responsibility for his actions. Darwinian research made the homosapiens a biologically determined creature all of whose actions were the outcome of his physical inheritance and altogether beyond his control. Behaviourists tied him down to the shackles of habits and reflexes and observed that all his actions were determined by physical stimuli. . Anthropologists declared that man's character-traits were based on heredity, and Sociologists held that his social environment was responsible for all his actions and conduct. Freudians regard him as psychologically determined, and announced that "the ego is not master in its own house," since all its decisions were made by the subconscious mind which was dominated by sex drives. Marxists viewed him as an entity economically determined.

What does all this indicate? It is the result of that powerful grip of "religion" of which, in their estimation, they had completely divested themselves. Though they had mentally liberated themselves from religious bonds, yet their subconscious was not altogether freed. This was so because after having released themselves from the negative thoughts of "religion," they did not adopt the positive thoughts of *dīn*. And, since it is impossible to have vacuum in nature, their minds were filled with negative thoughts from other sources. Now the exigencies of time compel them to face reality, especially because the generation that has sprung up under the influence of the philosophy of determinism has no respect for law and order and does not deem an offence as offence; for, they understand that they are not responsible for their actions. The only thing that could work as a deterrent in their path was the pressure of society. But when society itself is made of such individuals as have no regard for moral restrictions, they will have no difficulty in changing the law to conform to the behaviour of the immoral society itself. So the social laws are also undergoing a gradual change in the West, lowering the moral level. This has awakened their thinkers from their deep slumber and they are now

discarding the concept of determinism, and leaning towards the idea of free will which, in other words, means belief in human personality.

A question naturally arises here as to why people are so prone to religious exploitation. The reply generally given to this very important question is that "urge for religion" is inherent in man. Man must believe in something—be it God or mammon or anything else. This is, however, one of those fallacies which have come down in history and are accepted as "Eternal Truths" standing in no need of a careful scrutiny. The argument advanced in support of this assertion is that the entire history of mankind bears witness to this "urge" which man has manifested in different forms. This is how the protagonists of religion justify and rationalise it today. Even some honest and genuine scholars and thinkers have been convinced of this peculiar urge in man. Let us now examine this proposition and see what the basis or nature of this so-called urge for religion is.

One of the two fundamental and most powerful of man's drives is that of self-preservation. He does not want to perish: he wants to survive. This struggle for survival springs up in the human babe at its very birth when it at once instinctively cries for its feed. This struggle never diminishes in its intensity till man breathes his last.

This instinct of self-preservation human beings share with animals, but with a difference. An animal is provided by nature with adequate weapons and means of survival and self-defence; sheer physical power and strength, sharp teeth, iron-like claws, wings to fly, poisonous sting, camouflage of colour protection, capacity to swim or leap and run at lightning speed—animals inherit this equipment biologically as their right. A human being in comparison is helpless. In the face of the destructive calamities of nature, fierce birds and beasts, and even the onslaught of his own species, he has to invent tools for self-defence. In contrast to animals, the history of man is the history of the development of such tools of offence and defence.

It was the paradox of this helplessness of man and his strong instinct of self-preservation that made him bow down before anything that was powerful, useful or harmful to him. He prostrated before the manifestations of nature, he worshipped animals, he venerated trees and plants in the hope that by doing so he would survive. In these false and artificial props, he vainly sought his main support for survival.

It may be an interesting field for research to substantiate the fact that wherever and whenever a people have advanced high in their tool-making process, they have moved away from their false gods, and have even grown irreligious. Their highly developed armaments give them confidence; their conquest the world around induces them to reject all such superstitions. In the life of an individual even, one sees a similar process. In youth, physical strength and prowess keep him indifferent to religion and superstition with boldness, but as decay sets in the physical organs, he becomes more and more religiously inclined, seeking support in everything that he had rejected in his youth. Similarly, when he is successful in life, he seldom seeks the support of these false gods; but he searches for them most reverently when he is confronted with failures and finds his own means inadequate to meet the challenge.

But the problem of survival is not limited to physical survival only. A human being, unlike the animals, has the urge to survive on the human level as well. An animal feels absolutely satisfied and content after a hearty meal, and comes into action again only when it faces hunger or a threat to its own existence. This is not so with a human being. If he were to face a perpetual and hopeless struggle for economic security all his life, he may indeed be too engrossed with his plight to think of any other matter. But once having achieved economic and physical security, he is faced with the urge to survive on the human level. Today all welfare and socialist states are confronted with this problem with much greater intensity and on a wider scale than the underdeveloped countries. Due to their scientific power and prosperous economies, their attention

is inevitably focussed on the survival other than physical. Existentialism is nothing but an acute manifestation of this grave problem. The trend towards religion or mysticism among thinkers and scientists (especially in their old age) is yet another form of this search for human survival.

Such is the so-called "urge for religion"—may it be the primitive man's nature-worship, or the mysticism of modern thinkers. And this is the urge so often and so successfully exploited by the seekers of self-interest, in the name of religion.

Through the ages, the *dīn* of *Anbiya* had exposed the exploiters and challenged the false gods that the minds of men had propped up on high. This is the role that the *dīn*, embodied in the Qur'ān, is destined to play today and tomorrow, like the *adyān* of yesterday.

The Qur'ān recognises the demands of the instinct of self-preservation. It, therefore, strives to establish an economic system that guarantees the satisfaction of the basic needs of every individual. It declares that man is capable of conquering nature, that if he holds on firmly to the Permanent Values of life, the survival of his human self is ensured; for, then his personality knows no death. Permanent Values, as preserved in the Qur'ān, are unchangeable and true, hence trustworthy and reliable. They replace the false gods with the true God, and the meaningless superstitions of religion with the strength of rational conviction. In short, the Qur'ān satisfies the instinct of self-preservation both on the physical and human level and thus sets man free from the shackles of religion and the bondage of superstitions.

This was the *dīn* preached and established by the last of the line of *Anbiya—Muḥammad* (P).

Unfortunately, however, not long after the establishment of this *dīn*—i.e., the Islamic Social Order—by Muḥammad (P), Islam too met the same fate as that of the earlier *adyān*. God had perfected the Islamic *dīn* in the Qur'ān, and the *Rasūl* delivered the Book to the Muslims and established a Social Order thereon. But

shortly after his death, the forces of exploitation began to raise their ugly heads again. They scored their first success with the establishment of a hereditary kingship, sustained by capitalism. Then, to ensure their own survival and consolidation, these two forces started distorting the *dīn* of Islam into a *madhhab*. And before long, they succeeded. Like the *adyān* of the ancient *Anbiya*, Islam also gradually lost its soul and substance as a *dīn* and degenerated into a lifeless *madhhab* hide-bound by dogma and ritual. The only point of difference between this process of degeneration and its precedents in earlier history was that the code of Islam—the Qur'ān—remained intact in its original form, which fact, as already stated, is borne out by historical evidence. This is a fact of prime importance to be borne in mind. For, if any of the other religions of mankind seeks to return to its pristine purity as a *dīn*, it will find the task impossible in the absence of the original testament as revealed to its own *Nabi*. The Muslims alone can hope to restore Islam to its original form as a *dīn*, because the complete code of the Islamic *dīn* is enshrined in the Qur'ān and is fully preserved in precisely the same form as it was revealed to Muḥammad (P) about fourteen centuries ago.

The Qur'ān calls upon men not to be frightened by the terrible forces of destruction and not to despair or lose heart even when they find the prospect dark and menacing. It exhorts them to have faith in the way of life and the social order that it has prescribed, and to give it a fair trial. If they earnestly do so, it assures them that they will, before long, overcome all the hostile forces of decay and destruction and rise from the depths of their present misery to the heights of achievement and glory. And the essence of the social order prescribed by the Qur'ān is simply this: the forces of nature should be subdued and the gains of the victory should be utilised for the development and progress of mankind at large in accordance with the eternal values enshrined in the Revealed Book of Allah: for,

Only that way of life can survive which is beneficial for the whole of mankind (13 : 17).

I have given the best part of my life to a study of the solution that the Qur'ān offers to the problems, difficulties and dangers that beset humanity in the present times. I have been writing on the subject for nearly a quarter of a century, and my writings have reached all parts of the land. But they have so far been available only in the Urdu language. Now I have felt called upon to present to a wider audience the Qur'ānic solutions to contemporary problems through the medium of English. My chief purpose is to show that man has no reason to feel overwhelmed by the apparently insoluble problems that face him or look upon himself as helpless and despicable, and resign in despair. There is still a source to which he may turn for light and hope, and if he follows the light, there is no doubt that he will overcome the problems that seem to him insoluble and will also be able to go through further stages of evolution with confidence.

One of the serious difficulties, which I have encountered in this effort, relates to the translation in English of the Qur'ānic terms and phraseology bearing on *dīn*. Most of the prevalent English equivalents for the Arabic terms are associated with *madhhab*, and if I were to use them, it would be wellnigh impossible to distinguish *dīn* from *madhhab*, and the main purpose of the work would be defeated. It might be said that I could have chosen suitable equivalents from the English vocabulary; but this is in fact impossible, for the English vocabulary does not offer words and phrases that could convey precisely the exact sense of the relevant Qur'ānic terms. Take, for instance, the word *dīn* itself. It has no exact equivalent in the English language. The same exactly is the reason why it is practically impossible to translate the Qur'ān faithfully into another language. I quote here the well-known British Orientalist Professor H.A.R. Gibb, who says in his famous book *Modern Trends in Islam* (p. 4):

The Koran is essentially untranslatable, in the same way that great poetry is untranslatable. The seer can never communicate his

vision in ordinary language. He can express himself only in broken images, every inflection of which, every nuance and subtlety, has to be long and earnestly studied before their significance breaks upon the reader—images, too, in which the music of the sounds plays an indefinable part in attuning the mind of the hearer to receive the message. To paraphrase them in other words can only be to mutilate them, to substitute clay for fine gold, the plodding of the pedestrian intelligence for the winged flight of intuitive perception. . . . An English translation of the Koran must employ precise and often arbitrary terms for the many-faceted and jewel-like phrases of the Arabic ; and the more literal it is, the grayer and more colorless it must be. . . . Even in so simple a sentence as

إِنَّا نَحْنُ نُحْيِي وَنُمِيتُ وَإِلَيْنَا الْمَصِيرُ (50 : 43)

"Verily We give life and death and unto Us is the journeying," it is impossible to present in English (or perhaps any other language) the force of the five-times repeated "We" in the six words of the original.

In view of this serious difficulty, the only alternative for me was to retain the original Qur'ānic terms and phrases, and to explain their meanings in a glossary. These meanings have not been "invented" by me. They are based upon etymological considerations and the original meanings of the roots of the relevant words and phrases; they are supported by authoritative Arabic lexicons and also by the Qur'ānic verses in which they occur. I have also compiled a comprehensive lexicon of the Qur'ān on this pattern and it has already been published in four volumes. And on this basis, I have explained the meaning of the Qur'ān in a separate volume. (Both these works are in Urdu, and I propose to have, at least the latter, entitled *Mafhūm-ul-Qur'ān*, rendered into English. As a matter of fact this work is already nearing completion.)

From a comparative study of *dīn* and *madhhab*, it would appear that the two have certain common features; for instance, faith in God, in Divine Guidance and in the life Hereafter. But this similarity is not very deep or sufficiently extensive; for if one reflects over the real meanings of these phrases, it will be abundantly clear that this similarity between *dīn* and *madhhab* is merely superficial. In essence, even these articles of faith have

different meanings and connotations in *dīn* and *madhhab*; nay, these meanings are mutually contradictory in many respects.

The first few chapters of this work comprise an historical discussion of the concepts of God and religion. It should not be taken for a discussion of *dīn*; nor is it an attempt to compare Islam with other religions and establish its superiority over them. From the observations made earlier in this Introduction, it should be clear that a comparison between Islam and the existing religions is out of question. Islam is a *dīn*, or a way of life, which can be compared only with another way of life, and not with any religion, for religion as such has nothing at all to do with the problems of human life on earth. This explains why the Qur'ān does not present Islam as a rival to any religion; on the other hand, it asserts that this *dīn* (system of life) shall ultimately prevail over all the man-made systems (9 : 33). I would, therefore, entreat you, kind reader, not to treat this work as a book of religion; it should be studied only from one point of view and that is: whether or not the way of life that it expounds offers a solution to the grave difficulties and problems with which mankind is faced at present.

Today, all thoughtful men are disgusted both with materialism as well as religion (*madhhab*), for neither of these offers a way out of humanity's present predicaments. The only solution is through the *dīn* that is expounded in the following pages. This *dīn* is enshrined only in the verses of the Qur'ān, because, as already stated, of all the Books of the revealed *adyān*, the Qur'ān is the only book that has remained intact in precisely the same form in which it was revealed to Muḥammad (P) who delivered it to mankind.

The economic problem is indeed the gravest of all the problems of the present age, and neither Capitalism nor Communism offers an adequate and effective solution to it. The Islamic *dīn* shows us the path of redemption in this sphere also. But this aspect of Islam has

been touched upon only casually in the present book; it has been discussed at length in another book, which is now ready for the press.

Incidentally, in the pages which follow, the reader will come across numerous quotations, especially from Western writers. I should make it clear at the very outset that these quotations have not been used to prove the truth of any principle or precept of the Qur'ān. All the statements and assertions of the Qur'ān are self-evident truths and do not need any external corroboration. The quotations are meant to serve an entirely different purpose. The Qur'ān presented the outlines of a new Social Order some fourteen centuries ago. People then not only disagreed with it but also opposed it. But today, the needs of the time and the difficult situation in which mankind finds itself tend to bring humanity gradually nearer to the Social Order of Islam. Various non-Muslim thinkers who, until a short while ago, used to pin all their hopes on one or another of the various social systems devised by men without any Divine Guidance, have now begun to despair of them. And the outlines of the new schemes that they are now contemplating to ensure peace and justice and happiness for mankind appear very much like those of the Social Order prescribed by the Qur'ān ages ago. It is only to illustrate this fact that I have quoted frequently from the writings of some eminent Western thinkers. Human intellect is gradually advancing towards the comprehension of Permanent Values as set forth in the Qur'ān. Notwithstanding the forces of exploitation, the Eternal Truth is ultimately bound to prevail, the sooner the better for the emancipation of mankind.

References

1. J. W. T. Mason, *Creative Freedom*, pp. 183-4.
2. Albert Einstein, *Out of My Later Years*, p. 152.
3. Ibid., pp. 25, 114.
4. *Living Religions and A World Faith*, p. 202.
5. Bertrand Russell, *Why I Am Not A Christian*, p. 37.

GLOSSARY

We have already indicated in the Introduction that most of the terms and phrases used in the Qur'ān in relation to its teachings and the system that it stands for cannot be properly translated into English or any other language. In the present work, therefore, we have not tried this almost impossible task; instead, we have used the original Arabic terms and phrases wherever we apprehended that their meaning might be distorted in the process of translation. In this glossary, we shall try to explain the real meaning and true import of all such terms and phrases. These interpretations, it might be emphasised, are not subjective and *ex cathedra*; but are based upon authoritative and universally recognised lexicons of the Arabic language, for instance:

1. Lane, *Arabic-English Lexicon*
2. *Lisān-ul-'Arab*
3. *Tāj-ul-'Arūs*
4. *Muḥīṭ-ul-Muḥīṭ*
5. Rāghib, *Mufridāt-ul-Qur'ān*

These interpretations are also supported by the context in which they have been used in the respective Qur'ānic verses. All the relevant terms and phrases have been discussed at great length in my other work *Lughāt-ul-Qur'ān* (The Lexicon of the Qur'ān) which has been published in four volumes (in Urdu). In the following explanations, the respective roots of the relevant terms and phrases have been given within brackets.

1. *'Adl* (ل - د - ع): means justice, but not merely the justice dispensed by the courts; it covers justice in all spheres of life. Justice signifies the condition where every individual gets what is due to him. And "due" means not only what is due to him economically but all the fundamental rights that belong to him by virtue of his being a human being. The Qur'ān has laid great stress on *'adl*, and the establishment of *'adl* is the ultimate end of the Qur'ānic Social Order.

But the Qur'ān enjoins not only *'adl* but also *iḥsān*, which means compensating a person for his deficiencies and thus restoring his disturbed equilibrium. From the economic point of view, for instance, justice demands that every individual should receive the full product of his labours. But if it is found that this will not suffice for his needs, the gap between his earnings and his needs ought to be filled; this is called *iḥsān*. *Iḥsān* not only helps to restore the equilibrium of the person concerned but also to maintain the balance of the social system.

2. *Adyān* (ن - ى - د): This is the plural form of *dīn* (q.v.). According to the Qur'ān, every nation on earth has been blessed from time to time with Divine Guidance through the agency of *Anbiya*. All these *Anbiya* were entrusted with the establishment of the same *dīn* or way of life. But in course of time, their followers failed to maintain the *dīn* established by their *Anbiya* in its pristine purity; they deviated from the right course, altered and modified God's revealed guidance, and foisted upon it elements utterly alien and repugnant to its spirit. *Dīn* thus degenerated into religion (*madhhab*) and lost its soul.

The Qur'ān rules out the plurality of *dīns* and contemplates only one *dīn*; indeed, the plural of *dīn* (*adyān*) does not occur at all in the Qur'ānic text. However, the use of the plural form only refers to the several versions in which the Divine Guidance given to mankind through different *Anbiya* is known to exist.

In the present work also *adyān* has been used only in such cases.

3. *A'māl-ul-Ḥasanah: A'māl* is the plural form of *'amal,* which means action or deed. In English, the phrases "good deeds" and "evil deeds" are commonly used; but the Qur'ān uses the terms *a'māl-ul-ḥasanah* and *a'māl-us-sayyi'ah*, which are far more comprehensive. *Ḥasanāt* means acts that are *ḥasīn* or result in the creation of *ḥusn* (beauty); and *ḥusn* signifies "proper proportion". When a person conducts himself in accordance with the Divine Law, every act of his helps to bring about *ḥusn* in his own personality, or to make it balanced and properly proportioned; it is also conducive to the maintenance of balance and proportion in the social order and the universe at large. In the event, the individual develops a balanced personality, and a society rid of imbalances and disharmonies is created thereby which ensures true happiness to all.

On the other hand is the kind of conduct that is described by the Qur'ān as *a'māl-us-sayyi'ah*. *Sayyi'ah* is the antonym of *ḥasanah*; it stands for deeds that upset the balance of the individual personality and result in social disequilibrium.

The Qur'ān describes various attributes of God, which are collectively known as *al-asmā-ul-ḥusnā*, that is, attributes that are blended in a single Being in proper proportion and perfect equilibrium. The Qur'ān further calls upon men to develop in themselves the Divine Attributes, of course, within the human limits, with the same balance and proportion. This is the proper way of attaining the growth and fulfilment of the human personality.

4. *A'māl-us-Sayyi'ah:* see *A'māl-ul-Ḥasanah.*

5. *Amr:* In English there is only one word to denote the production of a thing, namely, creation. The Qur'ān, however, has indicated two stages of creation. The first

stage is that of Divine Planning, where God's Directive Energy initiates an inchoate object on the path leading to its destined incarnation. And the process by which it finally assumes the material form intended for it is called the process of creation. Creation involves the blending of various elements in a particular manner and in particular proportions, so as to produce an entirely new thing; for instance, the formation of water through a combination of hydrogen and oxygen.

How the Divine Planning operates in the various stages of *amr* is not known to us; but in the world of creation it can be comprehended through the physical laws. Indeed, man can not only comprehend the operation but also co-operate with God in this creative process. The laws under which the various objects in the universe function are made in the world of Divine Planning (*'ālam-ul-amr*), but they are enforced and executed in the world of creation (*'ālam-ul-khalq*).

6. *Anbiya:* the plural form of *nabi* (q.v.).

7. *Bāṭil:* see *Ḥaqq*.

8. *Birr* (ر - ر - ب)*:* It is generally translated as virtuous or pious deeds; in fact it has a much wider sense. The basic meanings of the word are extensiveness, largeness, ampleness. It, therefore, signifies conduct that tends to expand the personality of the individual and to ensure the fulfilment and happiness of the whole society. Such conduct helps to rid men of narrow-mindedness and to widen their outlook, and ensures for all an abundant supply of the necessities of life.

9. *Dīn* (ن - ی - د)*:* This word has been used in various senses, among them being: ascendancy, sovereignty, management or conduct of affairs, ruling power, power of dominion, mastership, ownership, possession or exercise of power, code of law, constitution of a state (in modern terminology), law of requital, an order in which conse-

quences of human actions can be measured, obedience, subjection, a way, course, mode, manner or conduct of life. *Dīn* would be all these aspects taken together.

Now, the Qur'ān has described Islam as *ad-dīn*, which is generally translated in English as *religion*. In the light of the meanings given above, however, it should be clear that this supposed English equivalent is not only incorrect but distorts and vitiates the true significance of *dīn*. Islam is not a religion; in the entire text of the Qur'ān it has not been described even once as a religion (*madhhab*). Islam is in fact a way of life, a social system, a polity, a code of law. In the context of the external universe, Islam signifies the Divine Order that governs the life and movement of the entire universe. The whole aim and purpose of the Qur'ān is the establishment of a universal order founded upon the Divinely-ordained values of life. This is *ad-dīn*.

10. *Ḥajj:* is the annual congregation of delegates of the Islamic community where they discuss the problems facing mankind and seek their solution in the light of the Divine Laws. The real purpose of this congregation is the creation of a universal brotherhood of men—which offers the only solution to the present difficulties of mankind.

11. *Ḥaqq* (ق-ق-ح): a very comprehensive Qur'ānic term. It is usually translated in English as truth or right, but it has in fact a much wider connotation.

According to Lane, its primary signification is suitableness to the requirements of wisdom, justice, right or rightness, truth, reality or fact; or to the exigencies of the case, as the suitableness of the foot of a door in respect of its socket for turning round rightly; the state, or quality, or property of being just, proper, right, correct or true. The state of being established or confirmed as a truth or fact. Everlasting existence. Valid, substantial or real. Existing as an established fact so as to be undeniable.

These several meanings of the word make it perfectly clear that *ḥaqq* is by no means confined to the realm of thoughts and ideas, notions and beliefs ; it stands for those constructive results of conceptions and beliefs which manifest themselves in a tangible form and are in harmony with the changing needs of the times. No belief or theory relating to this world can be described as *ḥaqq* unless its truth is established by a positive manifestation of its constructive potentialities. These constructive results will be abiding and imperishable, for the word *ḥaqq* is used only for things that are abiding and imperishable.

The antithesis of *ḥaqq* is *bāṭil*. It might be emphasised again that *bāṭil* does not stand merely for ideas or actions with destructive potentialities but includes all thinking and conduct that do not lead to constructive results.

12. *Iḥsān : see 'Adl.*

13. *Ithm* (ا - ث - م) *:* The Qur'ān uses various terms to denote "crime" or transgression of the Laws of God. These terms have in fact been used to indicate the different effects or results of crime. For instance, a person who wishes to keep to the right path in life ought to follow the party that has come into existence for the good of all mankind. (This party or group is called *ummat-un-muslimatun*.) If, however, he conducts himself in a manner that makes him so weak, depressed and listless that he is unable to keep in step with the party and tends to lag behind, he is guilty of *ithm*. In other words, every action which weakens human personality would fall within the category of *ithm*.

On the other hand, there are crimes that stimulate one's spirit of defiance and prompt him to transgress the limits of the law ; such crimes are described as *'udwān*. Both these categories of crime—*'udwān* as well as *ithm*—involve infringement of the Laws of God ; they differ only in respect of their results. It should be clear that the

prevailing conception of "sin" does not exist in the Islamic code of ethics. The notion that infringement of the Divine injunctions is "sin" whereas violation of the social code and rules is "crime" is a fallacy which is in conflict with the Islamic view of life. The Islamic society is an agency for the enforcement of the Divine Laws; it, therefore, rules out a duality between the laws and injunctions of God and those of society. This kind of duality is conceivable only in religion, not in *dīn*.

14. *Īmān* (ن-م-ا): to be convinced, to accept, to verify something, to rely upon, or have confidence in. This is usually translated in English as belief or faith; and faith in turn signifies acceptance without proof or argument, or without reference to reason or thought, knowledge or insight. Faith is generally regarded as the negation of knowledge or reason; it is said about Kant, for instance, that "he found it necessary to deny *knowledge* in order to make room for *faith*."

Indeed, Kant himself suggests a trichotomy of the modes of cognition into knowledge, opinion and belief:

> Opinion is such holding of a judgment as is consciously insufficient, not only objectively but also subjectively. If our holding of a judgment be only subjectively sufficient, and is at the same time taken as being objectively insufficient, we have what is termed believing. Lastly, when the holding of a thing to be true is sufficient both subjectively and objectively, it is knowledge (*The Critique of Pure Reason*).

According to the Qur'ān, however, *īmān* is not what has been described above as believing; it is what Kant calls knowledge. In fact, *īmān* is synonymous with conviction and is based upon reason and knowledge. The Qur'ān does not recognise as *īmān* any belief that is divorced from reason and involves the blind acceptance of any postulate. It is true that *dīn* involves the acceptance of certain things which cannot be known through sense perception; but there is no reason to presume that things which cannot be thus perceived do not exist. Indeed, our reason and thinking compel us to recognise the existence of many such things. In any

event, *īmān*, according to the Qur'ān, signifies the conviction that results from full mental acceptance and intellectual satisfaction. This kind of conviction gives one a feeling of *amn*—inner contentment and peace (*amn* and *īmān* have a common root). And *mu'min* is one who accepts the truth in such a way that it ensures his own peace and helps him to safeguard the peace and security of the rest of mankind. Indeed, *Al-Mu'min* is one of the attributes of God Himself.

15. *Jahannam:* usually translated as hell, which again does not properly convey the Qur'ānic sense of the term.

According to the Qur'ān, life has manifested itself in the human form after having gone through various stages of the process of evolution. This is the final link in the evolution of life in this world. But life is not limited to this world; it continues beyond death. The higher life that the individual with a developed personality is capable of leading after his life in this material world is called a heavenly life, or the life of *jannah*. On the other hand, the evolution of a personality not so developed is bound to be thwarted; this kind of life is called an infernal life or the life of *jahannam*. *Jannah* and *Jahannam* do not stand for places or localities; they denote different conditions of human life, which have been described metaphorically. It should also be clear that these conditions do not relate entirely to the life Hereafter; they have their beginnings here in this world of matter. A social order based upon Qur'ānic foundations results in a happy situation: the necessities of life are available in abundance and are secured in extremely decent ways befitting the human dignity. This brings in a real happiness and peace of mind. This is called a heavenly life (*jannah*). On the other hand, a society based upon principles repugnant to the Laws of God brings in anxiety and discontentment, and this is an infernal life (*jahannam*). *Jahannam* is a Hebrew compound made up of *ji* and *Hinnum*, and meaning the valley of *Hinnum*. This was

a famous valley situated in the south of Jerusalem where men were burnt alive and offered as a sacrifice to the idol Moloch. *Jahannam*, therefore, denotes a situation in which humanity is ruined. In Arabic, the word *jaḥīm* is often used in this sense; it means to prevent—that is, it denotes a condition in which human evolution is prevented and life begins to stagnate instead of progressing.

16. *Jannah*: see *Jahannam*.

17. *Khair* (ر - ى - خ): usually translated in English as good, as against *sharr*, which is translated as evil. These equivalents again do not give the exact Qur'ānic connotations of the words.

Man is endowed with manifold faculties and powers. When he uses these faculties in accordance with the laws of God, the results are conducive to the development of his own personality as well as to the welfare of mankind as a whole. This is *khair*. When, on the other hand, the potentialities of man are used in repugnance to the laws of God, the result tends to bring about the disintegration of the individual's personality and harm the interests of humanity at large. This is *sharr*. Moreover, such human faculties as are not put to any constructive use also fall within the definition of *sharr*.

This exposition of the notions of *khair* and *sharr* also provides an answer to the question why God, Who is Himself *khair*, has created *sharr*. In fact, *sharr* is not an independent quality or force created by God: man has been created with a free will, and when he, by his own choice, uses his potentialities for destructive purposes, the result is *sharr*.

18. *Khalq*: see *Amr*.

19. *Kufr* (ر - ف - ك): This is the antonym, or negation, of *īmān* (q. v.). It means to deny the truth, to prevent, to defy the laws of God. Basically, the word means to cover or conceal. One who denies the truth in fact seeks

to conceal it; he is, therefore, called a *kāfir*. *Kufr* means open denial, not hypocrisy. The hypocrite professes to believe in a thing that he does not accept at heart; the *kāfir*, on the other hand, has at least the forthrightness to proclaim his belief. That is why the Qur'ān condemns and consigns the hypocrite to the lowest depths of hell.

The definition of *kufr*, however, is not confined to denial of the truth; it includes the concealment, or withholding of the means of subsistence, which God has created for the good of all mankind and which He wants to be freely available to all.

20. *Madhhab* (ذ - ه - ب): literally means way or course. This word does not occur in the Qur'ān, and in the Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) it stands for "school of thought". The English word "religion" is usually translated as *madhhab*, and since Islam is generally described in English as religion, the word *madhhab* has come to be used for it in Urdu also. This is a fundamental fallacy; it might be stressed once again that Islam is a *dīn*, not a *madhhab*. Today, the only Divine *dīn* is Islam, whose principles and precepts are enshrined in the Qur'ān.

21. *Maghfirah* (غ - ف - ر): usually translated as forgiveness. The Qur'ānic law of requital, however, entirely negates the very conception of forgiveness. Every human action, according to this law, has a natural and logical outcome for which there can be no forgiveness. The correct meaning of the word *maghfirah* is to protect: for instance, *mighfar* means the helmet or piece of mail with which a soldier protects his skull and neck.

The first prerequisite for the prevention of disease is one's internal resistance: that is to say, his body should have sufficient internal strength to withstand an attack by forces detrimental to its health. If, however, the attack proves too strong and the person falls ill, his resistance must be strengthened so as to prevent the disease from taking a fatal turn and to effect its cure. This preventive and curative process would be called *maghfirah*.

Faithful compliance with the laws of God gives man sufficient strength to resist the destructive forces in life. But if he should ever fall into error and be guilty of infringing these laws, and his personality should consequently be weakened, the remedy would lie in good conduct calculated to recuperate and strengthen his personality and save him from the harmful effects of his lapse. This is called *maghfirah*.

22. *Malā'ikah* (ا - ل - ك or م - ل - ك, the latter being preferable): This is usually translated in English as angels; but the common religious notion of the word is very different from its Qur'ānic conception. The universe can be divided into two parts: the material world which we can perceive through the senses, and the world beyond our powers of perception. The Qur'ān, in the first instance, uses the word *malā'ikah* for the forces of nature at work in the world of matter. For instance, when it says, in the allegorical story of Ādam, that all the *malā'ikah* prostrated themselves before Ādam, it means that man has been endowed with the capacity to subdue and conquer the forces of nature. Moreover, the Qur'ānic meaning of *malā'ikah* includes, besides the physical forces of nature, the psychological forces within the human individual himself. When used with reference to the other part of the universe—the one beyond our powers of perception—the *malā'ikah* stand for the forces at work there to fulfil God's purpose and shape in practice the Divine Scheme of things. In this sense, the word also includes the agencies through which the word of God has been revealed to various *Anbiya*. So in this sense, *malā'ikah* may also be called messengers.

Malā'ikah are not endowed with any will or independent power; they are devoted to the performance of their respective duties, and cannot act otherwise than they do. Man is the only being in the whole universe endowed with a free will and independent power.

23. *Mushrik* (ش - ر - ك): one guilty of *shirk* (q.v.). Plural form: *mushrikīn*.

24. *Nabi:* This is usually translated in English as prophet (one who prophesies). This translation is again incorrect and misleading. *Nabi* is not a derivative of *nabaun* (نَبَأٌ) which means "to inform". In olden times the word *nabi* was used for a special functionary in the Jewish temple whose function was to prophesy future events. In its Qur'ānic connotation the word *nabi* is derived from *nabwatun* (نَبْوَةٌ) which means an elevated place; it, therefore, means a person standing on a pedestal; in other words, one who lives in this material world but can also perceive the unseen world beyond, because he (such a person) is endowed with Divine Revelation. The function or office of the *nabi* is called *nubuwwah* (نُبُوَّةٌ), that is, the function of securing Divine Guidance through revelation. (See also *Rasūl.*)

25. *Nubuwwah*: the function of securing Divine Guidance through revelation (for details see *Nabi*).

26. *Qur'ān* (ق - ر - أ): the Book that God gave to Muḥammad (P) through revelation, and which he passed on to the Muslims in the form in which we know it today. The internal evidence provided by the Qur'ān itself, as well as historical research, proves beyond a shadow of doubt that not even a comma of the original Qur'ānic text has been changed or is likely to be altered in the future. This is a unique attribute of the Qur'ān and is not shared by any other revealed book now extant. The Qur'ān embodies the *dīn* revealed to the earlier *Anbiya* in its true and perfect form. This Book does not give us merely a code of ethics; it provides us with a code of life which embodies guidance, principles and laws relating to every sphere of human life and activity. The Qur'ān, according to Islam, is the final authority in matters of *dīn*. The injunctions and the principles enshrined in the Book form the corner-stone of the Islamic polity and the limits laid down by it provide the framework within which the laws of the Islamic State may be formulated. These principles, or limits, or framework, are immutable,

but the statutes made by the state within these four corners are open to modification and change according to the needs of the times. The Qur'ān is the last of the Divine Books, because *nubuwwah* ended with Muḥammad (P). No subsequent human opinion or pronouncement in matters of *dīn*, therefore, can be recognised as authoritative; nor can any man-made law repugnant to the Qur'ān be regarded as binding upon the Muslims. The Qur'ān is a book of guidance for all mankind and transcends the barriers of time and space. The Islamic State is an instrument for the enforcement of the laws and injunctions embodied in the Qur'ān.

27. *Rabb* (ب - ب - ر) : is usually translated in English as the Lord. Again, the English equivalent does not convey the real meaning and significance of the Arabic original. *Rabb* means one who enables a thing or person to grow and develop and eventually to realise all its potentialities; and the process by which a person (or object) thus fulfils himself is called *Rubūbīyyah*. Nothing in the universe comes into being in a state of perfection or fulfilment; it is born with certain potentialities which, when developed and actualised, enable the object concerned to become what it was designed to be. Like other objects and beings in the universe, man is also endowed with manifold potentialities which, if properly developed, enable him to rise from the animal to the human level. The Qur'ān seeks to establish, in accordance with the Divine Laws, a social order under which the latent potentialities of every individual can be fully realised. This realisation of the individual's potentialities will include the sustenance and growth of his body as well as the fulfilment of his personality. This kind of social system is called the *Rubūbīyyah* order, and its establishment is the ultimate end and purpose of *dīn* of Islam.

28. *Rubūbīyyah:* see *Rabb.*

29. *Rasūl* (ل - س - ر): The duty of the *nabī* does not end with the securing of Divine Guidance; in fact this is

but the beginning of his task. The root of the word *rasūl* means a messenger, or who has a message to deliver. It is the duty of the *nabi* to deliver to mankind the message revealed to him by God, without the slightest change or modification; it is by virtue of this function that he is called a *rasul*. But even the faithful delivery of the Divine Message does not complete the performance of the *rasūl's* function; he is also responsible for setting up a social order in accordance with the principles enshrined in the Divine Message that he has delivered. In other words, he is entrusted with the establishment of "God's kingdom upon earth". He is charged with the revolutionary function of ending the sway of tyrannical, oppressive and self-seeking rulers and priests and establish a free order of society in which men will not be dependent upon other men and will not be subject to anything except the Divine Law. The *rasūl*, from this point of view, appears as a great revolutionary who does not content himself with sermons but practically enforces by example the Divine Law and seeks to bring all men under its sway. This is the real function of the *rasūl* (*risālah*).

In view of the above explanations it is clear that *nabi* and *rasūl* are two facets of a single entity, or two faces of the same coin. A *nabi* is also a *rasūl*, and *vice versa*. The plural form of *rasūl* is *rusul*.

Nubuwwah, or the reception of the revelation of Divine Guidance by *anbiya* or *rusul*, ended with Muḥammad (P). The Guidance revealed to him is preserved and enshrined fully and exactly in the Qur'ān. But the function of *risālah*, or the delivery of the Divine Message to all mankind and the establishment of a social order in accordance with its principles, has devolved upon the nation or *ummah* that believes in that Book, that is, the Qur'ān.

30. *Rūḥ* (ر-و-ح): usually translated as spirit or soul. "Spirit" has a special meaning in Christian metaphysics, and "soul" is the expression for a peculiar notion in Greek philosophy. The Qur'ānic conception of *rūḥ* differs essentially from "soul" as well as "spirit". Its most appro-

priate translation would be "Divine Energy," which expresses itself through a free and self-determining will. Free will is possessed only by God, Who imparts it to human beings also; no other being is endowed with this power. The Qur'ān holds that the power of the human will is not a product of man's natural constitution; it cannot, therefore, be called a material force. It is a power specially bestowed by God upon men; that explains why God has described it as "His *rūḥ*"—meaning thereby the human personality, which is the bearer of the free will.

This should not, however, be taken to mean that the human personality is a part of the Divine Personality. Personality is absolutely indivisible; no personality, therefore, can possibly be a part of any other personality. We are all familiar with the fallacy that the human spirit is a part of the Spirit of God bogged down in the world of matter, and that the whole end and purpose of man's life on earth is to purge his spirit of its material impurity, so that it may merge again with the Divine Spirit. This misconception is thoroughly repugnant to the spirit of the Qur'ān. God has endowed every individual with an inchoate personality, and the purpose of his worldly life is to develop his personality so that it may be able, after death, to continue its journey further.

The word *rūḥ* has been used in the Qur'ān in other senses also. But in the present work it has not been used in any of the other senses; the other meanings are, therefore, not given here.

31. *Shaiṭān* (ش-ط-ن): Man is endowed with manifold faculties and is free to use them as he wills. These faculties include his impulses. If he uses these faculties in accordance with the laws of God, constructive results, which are conducive to benefit the interests of all mankind, follow. If, on the other hand, he uses his faculties in a manner repugnant to the laws of God, the results are destructive. The impulse that induces man to use his faculties in contravention of the Divine Laws is called *shaiṭān*. The common English equivalent for this word, namely,

devil, does not properly express the Qur'ānic sense of the original term.

The word *shaiṭān* has also been used for defiant or rebellious human beings; in other words, for such men as defy the laws of God themselves and also induce others to defy those laws.

Since destructive activity inevitably brings frustration and sorrow, *shaiṭān* has also been called *iblīs*—which means a disappointed being who fails to secure happiness in life.

32. *Sharr:* see *Khair.*

33. *Shirk* (ش-ر-ک) *:* obedience to man-made laws along with or in contravention of the laws of God. Islam does not permit obedience to any laws other than those laid down by God. Indeed, not only actual obedience to other laws but even the belief that it is permissible and proper to obey these laws is tantamount to *shirk.* Polytheism is generally understood to mean the worship of idols. It is, of course, true that idol-worship, or the worship of any of the forces of nature, amounts to *shirk.* But this definition is not exhaustive, nor are these forms of worship the most serious manifestations of *shirk*, for they result mainly from ignorance. The most heinous form of *shirk* is the obedience to laws and injunctions other than those of God. From the Islamic point of view, the important thing is obedience, not worship. Muslims obey God; they do not worship Him in the general sense of the word.

34. *Taqdīr* (ق-د-ر) *:* This is generally translated as fate, and fatalism is widely believed to be one of the fundamental elements of the Islamic creed. This is absolutely wrong. A theory of life, which is based upon the freedom of the human will, cannot possibly have anything to do with fatalism. Human freedom and fatalism are mutually contradictory concepts.

A mango stone embedded in soil, if properly looked after and nourished, has the capacity to grow into a

mango tree, which will eventually yield the mango fruit. The realisation of this potentiality of the mango stone is called its *taqdīr*. To be more precise, *taqdīr* means measure. The true measure of the mango stone is the mango tree; if a stone does not grow into a tree, it does not conform to its measure. On the other hand, no mango stone can grow beyond its measure: this is the destiny of the mango stone.

Man has been endowed with manifold potentialities. If he follows the right path in life, and adheres to it, his potentialities are gradually realised, and his personality is so developed that he is enabled to attain the perfect human stature in this life and to cover the evolutionary stages yet to come beyond this world. This development of the individual is called his *taqdīr*.

35. *Taqwa* (و-ق-ی): The common English equivalent, namely, piety, does not properly express the real meaning of the word. Deviation from the path of right conduct leads man to ruin; *taqwa* helps to keep him on the right path and thus save him from ruin. But merely saving oneself from ruin is a negative virtue, whereas the Qur'ān regards the positive aspect of life as of fundamental importance. In the context of the Qur'ān, therefore, *taqwa* involves not only saving oneself from the forces of destruction but also stabilising one's personality through the preservation and enforcement of the Laws of God. To be more concrete, it means the faithful and efficient performance of all the duties that God has enjoined upon man through Revealed Guidance. This meaning is wide enough to include loftiness of character and purity of conduct. One who leads a life of *taqwa* is called *Muttaqi*.

36. *Tauḥīd* (ا-ح-د): exclusive obedience to the laws of God. As already indicated under "Qur'ān," these laws are embodied in the Qur'ān.

37. *Taubah* (ت-و-ب): When on his way to a particular place, a person reaches a crossing, there he takes a

turn and goes along. But after a short while he realises that he had put himself on the wrong path which will not take him to his destination. He must now turn back and return to the point where he took the wrong turn. This kind of return is called *taubah.*

It is obvious, however, that a mere return to the cross-roads will not take the man to his destination ; he will also have to adopt the right path. *Taubah*, therefore, covers all the three aspects of the process: realising one's error, retracing his steps and taking to the right course.

38. *'Udwān:* see *Ithm.*

TRANSLITERATION

ا	—a	ط	—ṭ
ب	—b	ظ	—ẓ
ت	—t	ع	—‘
ث	—th	غ	—gh
ج	—j	ف	—f
ح	—ḥ	ق	—q
خ	—kh	ك	—k
د	—d	ل	—l
ذ	—dh	م	—m
ر	—r	ن	—n
ز	—z	و	—w
س	—s	ه	—h
ش	—sh	ء	—’
ص	—ṣ	ى	—y
ض	—ḍ		

VOWELS

(*i*) *Short*

َـ a (as u in but)
ِـ i (as i in tin)
ُـ u (as u in bull)

(*ii*) *Long*

آ ā (as a in father)
اِیْ ī (as ee in bee)

أوْ ū (as oo in root)
اَوْ au (as in aught)
اَیْ ai (as in bat)

1. Al (represents the article *the*) as in al-kitāb. But in "solar letters" (l) should be passed over in pronunciation and assimilated to the following consonent.

2. ة at the end has been represented by h, for example Raḥmah, for Raḥmat (رحمة).

Chapter I

WHAT IS RELIGION?

I. The So-called Urge for Religion

RELIGION is as old as the rise of self-consciousness in man, but its origin, as that of man, is shrouded in obscurity. Man has, probably, lived on earth for about a million years. During the greater part of this period, he had no civilisation and has not left his impress on any durable material. All we know about him is based on his fossilised remains, and while they tell us a good deal about his physical shape and structure, they tell us little about the *man* in him. Man acquired some rudiments of civilisation when he began to work on stone and metal and to shape for himself tools, which hitherto he had taken ready-made from nature. The remains of his artifacts, however, shed valuable light on his developing needs and beliefs.

Religion can be traced back to the dawn of human civilisation. The caverns of primitive men, wherein dead bodies were laid with a provision of food and weapons, suggest beliefs and practices which are unmistakably religious in character. It would seem that no sooner had man attained the stage of mental development, represented by self-consciousness, and started on the road to civilisation, than his breathless wonder at the world around him gave way to speculation on his origin and destiny and on the power which created the world and sustains it. His thinking took the form of myth-making and his tools of thought were not concepts but symbols. He felt vaguely but intensely an infinite power at work in the world around him. This dimly-sensed power evoked in him the responses of fear and reverence, or worship.

The urge to worship appears to have always been there, but man can worship only that which he believes to be both good and powerful, because of his own helplessness. Primitive man was slowly and painfully groping his way to the idea of religion. He was seeking, with his scanty resources, for an object which he could appease or revere and worship. No doubt, he worshipped crude objects or simple natural phenomena, but we must not forget that for him they only symbolised the supreme power at work in the universe. Worship is a characteristic religious activity and the anthropologists have amassed ample evidence to prove that primitive man did worship something or other. It has also been proved that primitive tribes, even now living, cherish beliefs and engage in practices which are undeniably religious in character inasmuch as they refer to some deity or deities and to life after death.

In the light of these findings one can safely affirm that religion is a universal phenomenon (for the simple reason that, as explained in the Introduction, the instinct of self-preservation is inherent in man). Plutarch, who flourished in the first century of the Christian era with extensive knowledge of the world of his time, affirms:

> In wandering over the earth, you can find cities without walls, without science, without rulers, without palaces, without treasures, without money, without gymnasium or theatre, but a city without temples to gods, without prayer, oaths and prophecy, such a city no mortal has yet seen and will never see.[1]

In the modern age, religion is visible in many different aspects—sometimes it is looked upon as a natural phenomenon and as such it falls within the sphere of science. But, as the experience of individual man, it falls within the purview of psychology, while, as a social fact, it is the concern of the sociologist. The sociologist is, however, interested only in the function of religion as a cohesive force in society. The role of religion in human history has also not been overlooked: it has been studied. In our attempt to understand the nature of religion, therefore, we will first consider the definitions which have been offered by the various scientists and thinkers who

have made a special study of the subject.

II. The Definition of Religion

The student of religion is as much bewildered by the diversity and variety of religions as he is baffled by the complexity of each single religion. He finds it well-nigh impossible to extract the essential element from the complex and heterogeneous mass of beliefs and practices in which it is embedded. In these circumstances, it is natural for him to select some aspect which he happens to regard as an important characteristic and try to define religion within this particular framework. This, among others, is the main reason why there are so many definitions of religion; but none of them encompasses the entire phenomenon or commands universal acceptance. In fact, every investigator in this field has given his own definition and some have offered more than one. Surprisingly enough, some of them are even self-contradictory. Some scholars hold that a set of doctrines is essential to religion; while others believe that religion may exist as a purely emotional attitude without any beliefs. Again, for some, belief in God is the life-blood of religion—but others reject this view and cite as instances Buddhism and other atheistic religions. However, let us examine a few representative definitions of religion, hoping to find some element common to them all which serves as the clue to a comprehensive definition:

Religion is (subjectively regarded) the recognition of all duties as divine commands (Kant).

Religion is to take everything individual as a part of the whole, everything limited as a representation of the infinite (Schleiermacher).

That which expresses the innermost tendency of all religions is the axiom of the conservation of values (Hoffding).

William James holds religion to be "the feelings, acts and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider the divine." Calverton takes a different view of religion. "Magic and religion,"

he affirms, "evolved as (a) means whereby (man) believed he was able to acquire power (over his environment) and make the universe bend to his wishes." Professor Whitehead speaks of religion as "what the individual does with his own solitariness,"[2] and in another place defines it as a "force of belief cleansing the inward parts".[3] Whitehead's considered opinion on the nature of religion is stated more fully and clearly in the following passage which occurs in his *Science and the Modern World*:

> Religion is the vision of something which stands beyond, behind, and within, the passing flux of immediate things; something which is real, and yet waiting to be realised; something which is a remote possibility, and yet the greatest of present facts; something that gives meaning to all that passes, and yet eludes apprehension; something whose possession is the final good, and yet is beyond all reach; something which is the ultimate ideal and the hopeless quest.[4]

Commenting on various definitions of religion, Professor G. Galloway says, "When we keep in mind the psychological factors of the religious consciousness and the way in which they work, some definitions of religion strike us by their inadequacy and one-sidedness. We find, perhaps, that they are applicable to certain stages of religion but not to others, or that they leave out what is important." However, undeterred by the lack of success which had attended the efforts of so many great scholars, Galloway has advanced his own definition. He defines religion as "Man's faith in a power beyond himself whereby he seeks to satisfy emotional needs and gain stability of life, and which he expresses in acts of worship and service."[5]

A.C. Campbell, in his illuminating work *On Selfhood and Godhood*, has devoted a chapter to the discussion of the problem of a definition for religion. He too has put forward a definition of his own which deserves consideration:

> Religion may be defined as a state of mind comprising belief in the reality of a supernatural being or beings endowed with transcendent power and worth, together with the complex emotive attitude of worship intrinsically appropriate thereto.[6]

Leuba, in his book, *A Psychological Study of Religion*, has listed no less than forty-eight different definitions of religion, each offered by a scholar of repute. Even this is far from being an exhaustive list as Ducasse in his book, *A Philosophical Scrutiny of Religion*, has quoted twenty-seven other definitions.[7] To add to the confusion, as has been observed before, many definitions contradict one another. As Professor H.J. Paton has pointed out, "For any serious view of religion, it is always possible to find another, equally serious, which seems to be its precise opposite."[8]

Ouspensky, looking at the formidable array of conflicting definitions, was led to accept the relativistic theory of religion. According to him, "Religion corresponds to the level of a man's being; and one man's religion might not be at all suitable for another man."[9] His definition is clearly inadequate and unsatisfactory inasmuch as it completely ignores the Reality to which religion refers and denies it any form of objectivity.

We have been trying to seek an element which is common to all the important definitions. That element, if found, would constitute the core of religion and as such can be expected to occupy the central place in every religion. The element, which we find common to most of the definitions, though not to all, is the belief in the existence of a transcendent cosmic power to which the term "Divine" is usually applied. Divinity too has been represented as one single entity and also as many; but the monistic conception has been more widely accepted than the pluralistic. While the existence of the supreme power is seldom questioned by religious people, their ideas regarding its nature are as vague, as indefinite and as varied as are the definitions of religion itself, and each great writer on religion seems to have conceived God in his own way. Only a few instances can be cited here. Kant speaks of God as "the moral Law-giver," and William James describes Him as "the Higher part of the universe." Matthew Arnold believes God to be "the power that makes for righteousness."[10] For Sir James Jeans, He is "the

greatest of mathematicians." Bergson, in one of his earlier works, identified Him with the creative energy. Later on, when his thought had taken a mystical turn, he spoke of God as "Love and the Beloved".[11] Thus we see that there are as many definitions of God as there are of religion. The point to be emphasised, however, is that God is infinite and, therefore, our finite understanding can never encompass His nature. Some of those who attempt to define God give free rein to their imagination and indulge in wild speculation quite out of touch with Reality. Others, seeking something of which their mind can take a firm hold, identify God with nature. But they forget that God is transcendent. He may be sensed but cannot be comprehended. Apprehension of God is supposed to occur in the mystical experience,* but this apprehension, as the great mystics themselves testify, is only fragmentary, elusive and tantalising. A comprehensive definition of God, therefore, is not possible. None-the-less, it may be possible to formulate some idea of Gcd. But religion is not satisfied with that. It requires a more adequate idea of God. We should, therefore, take up the question whether and how such an idea of God may be formulated.

III. The Idea of God

Belief in God is the life-blood of religion. Questions relating to God have naturally engaged the attention of the advocates and opponents of religion. What is God, and how do we know Him, are questions which no serious student of religion can brush aside. Adequate and satisfactory answers to these basic questions will enable us to understand the nature of God and assess the value of religion. In fact, we find that these questions too have received different and conflicting answers. It may be of interest to note that even the questions themselves have been phrased according to the point of view of each writer. Those who employ the positivist approach have put the

* The nature of this so-called "experience" will be discussed in a subsequent chapter.

question in the form of "How did the idea of God take its rise in the human mind?" Grant Allen and I. G. Frazer are fair representatives of this group of writers. Their answer may be summarised thus.

Primitive man lived in constant dread of the violent forces of nature which threatened him with physical injury and even death. Storms, thunderbolts, earthquakes and other cataclysms of nature frightened and overawed him, and as animistic tendencies dominated his mind, he personified the forces of nature and sought to placate them by offering them worship and sacrifice. He thus peopled the world with gods. Later on, as man's mind developed, he found it necessary to rationalise his old attachment to them. The urge for unification led him to reduce the multiplicity of gods to one supreme deity. He formed an abstract idea of the Absolute and then, driven by unconscious emotional urges, objectified that idea. The God thus evolved is a subjective God. In the words of Sheen, "the only God attained by a purely affective approach is a subjective God born of one's own feelings."[12]

This, in brief, is the evolutionary theory, which purports to give an account of the origin and development of the idea of one God. It is presumed that the idea of God is found only in the higher religions of modern man and that it was alien to the mind of primitive people. Recently, however, factual evidence has been brought to light which proves that this presumption is erroneous. On the basis of these facts, some scholars have advocated the view that primitive man's mind too was gifted with the awareness of God. According to Professor Toynbee, this view is put forward by Father Schmidt, who based his theory on observations made by him of "common elements in the religions of the most primitive surviving peoples, now scattered in holes and corners at opposite extremities of the inhabited surface of the Earth."[13] The present writer cannot say how the scholars who are working in this field have reacted to this theory. If they regard it as, at least, worthy of serious consideration, it would

mean that a different approach to the question "What is God ?" is possible. If God's existence was recognised even by the most primitive people, it may be safely argued that the idea of God has a genuine reference to the Real, however imperfectly and inadequately it may represent the Real. Religion too, as a means of contacting the Real, therefore, becomes validated. Instead of being the expression of subjective wishes, religion is seen to be a transaction with the objective Reality. The goal of religion, from this standpoint, is not a phantom of imagination but Reality itself. The point being important, we should bear in mind its implications which we have to consider later on. For the moment, it should suffice to remark that in this context the idea of objective Reality and belief in a being who exists independently of us—a being who is both immanent and transcendent—is a dim reminiscence of the original *dīn*.*

We can now take up the question, "What is Religion?"

IV. What Is Religion?

Two different views of God were considered in the preceding section. According to the first view, God is the Ultimate Reality, and, according to the second, God exists only as an idea in the human mind. Corresponding to these two views of God, there emerge two views of religion. According to one, religion deals with the Absolute. Its business is to interpret the Absolute to us and to tell us how we can get close to it. According to the second view, religion is a superstition born of human wishes and fantasies. Its function is to provide illusory gratification to human wishes which are denied satisfaction in the physical world. From this point of view, religion originates in the primitive mentality of man in his ignorance, his fears and hopes. Jung, for instance, explains religion as a biological device for safeguarding the human self and his social fabric against the forces of disintegration. It is obvious that such a view relegates

***Dīn* to be explained later.

religion to the position of a private affair of the individual, something which has only a fictitious value to him, and assumes a role hardly distinguishable from the fantasies of self-willed individuals. Religious activity will thus appear only to be primitive, irrational or prelogical, and completely out of touch with the real world.

The scientist's approach to religion, on the other hand, is empirical and historical. He treats religion as a natural phenomenon and hopes to understand it by tracing it back to its origin in primitive society and taking note of the changes it underwent in the course of history. His stress is chiefly on the social function of religion. He thinks that religion comes into being and survives because it promotes social cohesion and group solidarity: but he fails to grasp the essence of religion as practised in primitive society, because there it is enveloped in bizarre notions and grotesque superstitions. Lacking the (so-called) spiritual insight, he is led to regard the whole mass as religion, and takes its superficial aspects as constituting the core of religion itself. Auguste Comte was the pioneer in this type of investigation. He believed that human thought, in the course of its development, has passed through three well-defined stages—theological, metaphysical and, finally, scientific. Religion thus represents the earliest phase of mental evolution. In this stage, man's approach to Reality was emotional and irrational—in short, only mystical, while in the metaphysical stage, he relied more upon reason to lead him to the heart of Reality. In the last stage, that is, the scientific, he realised the importance of the observational data for gaining some knowledge of the world itself in which he lived. If we accept Comte's view, it will mean that religion has no relevance to the modern world, and its image will thus have to be regarded as a mere relic of the past, with no place in the scheme of modern knowledge and no bearing on the present-day life, deserving to be consigned to the limbo of obsolete ideas.

Another empirically oriented theory gives a better reasoned account of the origin and development of religion.

It points out that primitive man lived in constant fear of the forces of nature. Confronted with them, he suffered from an intense feeling of helplessness. He personified and deified these forces and offered sacrifices and worship to placate them. This was the first stage of religion, in which man humbly prostrated himself before these gods in the hope of pacifying them and inducing them to spare him. Later, he grew somewhat confident and thought that he could actively interfere in the course of natural events and could devise methods to bend these forces to his will. The attitude developed a new phase of religion which was that of magic. Then man tried to influence the deities by charms, spells, incantations and occult practices, and thus probably the institution of priesthood arose to cope with the problem, and the magicians became the first priests.

As human groups increased in size and their structure became complex, tribal customs could no longer regulate the behaviour of their members. The need was felt for a central organisation, and the institution of Kingship thus made its first appearance. A single man was invested with absolute power and the entire administration was placed in his hands. He occupied a position high above the common people and exercised absolute control over their lives and property. His word was law submission to which was considered essential. He would brook no opposition. The desire for power is insatiable. However powerful the monarch might be, he wanted still greater power. With the passage of time, this turned him into an object of fear, hatred or love according to his treatment of his subjects. The theory that absolute monarchy was an indispensable condition for peace and order in society was universally accepted. So, it was bound to influence religion also. The idea of God was fashioned on the model of the absolute monarch, and He was conceived as the Being who ruled over heaven and earth as an arbitrary despot. He was the King of kings, the Lord of the universe, whose will was unquestionable and whose ways were mysterious. Man stood before Him quaking with

fear—an abject and helpless creature. Religion, according to this theory, had now entered the third and the final stage. God was conceived as a tyrant, and religion became an instrument of oppression. It served the ruling class by representing it as appointed by the Divine Master to exercise power in the land and control over the masses. By means of "spiritual sanctions" it protected the ruling class against the fury of the oppressed people. With religion to defend them, the rulers could, with impunity, trample upon the rights of the common man which still remained undefined. This, in brief, is the Marxist theory of religion. The Marxists view religion as a cunning device employed by the bourgeoisie to safeguard their vested interests against the proletariat. Religion, they aver, is an opiate which makes the people insensible to their sufferings and persuades them to resign to their unhappy lot. This view of religion needs serious consideration. We may be permitted to say that the world of religion has not been able to meet this challenge so far. Only *dīn* can meet it, as we shall discuss later on.

In so far as the view of the scientists is concerned, it may be pointed out that religion to them represents a distinctive approach to Reality quite different from the scientific approach. While science has been developing a truer and clearer view of one aspect of Reality, religion has been striving to achieve a clearer perception and a more and more adequate apprehension of Reality as a whole and its relation to and meaning for man in a realm beyond the reach of natural science. Professor Heisenberg, the famous physicist, in one of his recent writings, has observed that as science becomes more and more perfect, it gets farther and farther away from concrete reality and enters into the realm of abstraction. As scientific concepts tend to become more and more abstract, they get more and more remote from the real world of our daily experience. Each step that takes science nearer to perfection takes it farther away from the realities of life. Religion, on the other hand, strives to keep close to the living reality, and its concepts too, though they may

not take the form of scientific expression, yet are more meaningful and in closer touch with human life.

The philosophical approach to religion is certainly more appropriate than that of the scientist. The philosopher's quest is for the meaning and he strives to achieve a comprehensive view of religion and its value to human life. Unfortunately, many philosophers have been hampered by their preconceptions and have, therefore, failed in their search. Human reason, moreover, has serious limitations and it may be doubted if it can lead us by itself to the core of Reality. Some philosophers, as a result of deep and intensive reflection, have, no doubt, arrived at a conception of God, but this God turns out to be a mere abstraction, far different from the living God which religion tries to comprehend. Reason, by itself, in short, has not enabled us so far to answer the question: "What is religion?"

Let us now turn to the mystic's approach. He appeals to his subjective experience which he finds to be absolutely convincing and supremely satisfying, at least to himself. He claims that in this experience he feels himself to be in close and living contact with the Absolute. Unfortunately, this experience, as the mystic himself admits, is ineffable and incommunicable. He can neither convey his knowledge to others nor can he convince others that his experience was not purely subjective and illusory. Further, the mystic's Absolute is static and unchanging. Time is reduced to a mere illusion. But the world of our experience is continuously in a flux. What is then the source of change if God is outside the stream of time? The mystic has no plausible answer to such a question.

Perhaps a survey of the higher religions of the world (which originally were the same *dīn* received by the various *Anbiya* from time to time) might enable us to get an answer to the question of the nature and validity of religion. Unfortunately, this is not an easy task. Formidable obstacles will have to be surmounted before we can form a just estimate of the value of each of the *adyān*. The lives of most of the *Rusul* and the history

of *adyān* are shrouded in obscurity, and even the keen eye of the historian can hardly penetrate the mist that envelops their lives. Authentic facts about their lives are hard to obtain and the problem is more complicated by the tangle of myths that has been woven around them in the course of centuries. Even patient historical research has, very often, failed to separate fact from fiction. The result is that the accounts of their lives are mostly hearsay or conjectural. What is worse, even their teaching has not come down to us in its original form. We do not know, for certain, when their so-called sayings were committed to writing, and there is good reason to believe that the sacred books, generally supposed to embody their teaching, have been tampered with from time to time. It would seem that in the course of successive editions many passages were excided and many were interpolated. The teaching of the *Rusul* has certainly been preserved in the scriptures but only in a distorted form. It is, therefore, well-nigh impossible to recover the original form and substance of these *adyān*.

The only exception is the *Dīn* of Islam. Its *Nabi* and his companions lived in the limelight of history. His teaching and actions were extensively recorded by his followers and they can be checked by the accounts given by contemporary historians of neighbouring lands. Authentic facts about his life and doings are numerous and easily accessible in contemporary records. Moreover, the Qur'ān, on which Islam is firmly based, has come down to us exactly as it was delivered through the *Rasūl*. It has always been transcribed with scrupulous care. No Muslim scribe has ever dared to omit or insert a single letter. The source of Islam has thus remained untouched and unadulterated. We can reasonably hope, therefore, that a close study of Islam will give us the clue to the real nature and function of *dīn*.

References

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4. A.N. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World*, p. 222.
5. George Galloway, *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 181, 184.
6. A.C. Campbell, *On Selfhood and Godhood*, p. 248.
7. Cf. Ibid., p. 234.
8. H.J. Paton, *The Modern Predicament*, p. 59.
9. P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous*, p. 299.
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11. Henry Bergson, *The Two Sources of Religion and Morality*, pp. 245 6.
12. Fulton J. Sheen, *Philosophy of Religion*, p. 238.
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Chapter II

THE FUNCTION OF DĪN

I. Dīn and Man

WE have stated that a careful study of Islam is likely to give us an insight into the nature and function of *dīn*. Before embarking on this study, however, it would be advisable to consider its role in human life. The primary function of *dīn* is the development of human personality. It determines man's outlook on life and makes life meaningful to him. It aims at the transformation of man's character by organising his desires into a harmonious system of living. To the extent that it succeeds in this aim, it eliminates the sources of internal conflict and enables man to live at peace with himself and at peace with his environment. Success and happiness are basically the fruits of a genuine personal conviction. But *dīn* has its social side as well. It is concerned with man as he exists in a network of social relationship. It does not isolate man from his social setting; rather, it brings him closer to his fellow-beings. It has a meaning for man as an individual; but it has a far richer meaning for him as a member of a social group. *Dīn* leads man to the realisation that he can develop his potentialities only by co-operating with his fellow men in the attainment of common ends. In this way, it plays a vital part in the development of customs, laws and institutions. It is, therefore, the proper subject of study not only for the psychologist but also for the historian and the sociologist. All are equally bound to take it seriously and are not justified in explaining it away (as in the case of religion) as an illusion or a matter of mere personal concern. The

philosopher, too, has the right to examine the validity of *dīn's* view of Reality and to assess its value as a cohesive force in society. *Dīn* has nothing to fear from an impartial inquiry. It has survived the fiercest onslaughts of science and philosophy so far directed against it.

Iqbal has rightly observed: "Higher religion[1] . . . recognized the necessity of [concrete]* experience as its foundation long before science learnt to do so."[2] He has also drawn attention to the central position of *dīn* in a synthesis of all the data of human experience.[3] In this connection it should be noted that the response of *dīn* to Reality is not a partial one. It is not merely cognitive as it is in the case of science and philosophy, nor is it merely emotional as it is in aesthetics. It is a total response involving all the elements in the personality of the individual. Further, it is the response of a coherent harmonious personality, a personality organised on the basis of a synthetic principle. In the words of Iqbal, "Religion . . . is neither mere thought, nor mere feeling, nor mere action; it is an expression of the whole man."[4] We must not lose sight of this fact if we want to understand the real nature of *dīn*.

Let us pause to consider the implications of this view. If *dīn* is the expression of the whole man, then his achievements whether in the sphere of action or of thought, must somehow be related to his *dīn* or, in other words, to his basic beliefs about his relation to the Ultimate Reality. These beliefs essentially relate to *dīn*. We see then that *dīn* has given the impetus to the noblest enterprises of man. It is generally claimed that a scientific ideology can very well achieve this object. But this is not true, for the simple reason that a scientific or materialistic ideology, by its very nature, cannot satisfy the whole man. It may appeal to his reason or interest but will, certainly, remain unrelated to other elements in his personality, and will in effect lead to the fragmentation of personality itself. Science and art bring satisfaction to the rational and the emotional (aesthetic) sides of

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*Author's addition.

human nature respectively. But *dīn* sets out to build up a view of the world which will satisfy all the deepest longings of man. Can *dīn* really accomplish this stupendous task? Some great thinkers of the modern age who confuse *dīn* with religion have posed this question, and stoutly maintain that it cannot do so. They point out that in the past the fruits of religion have been not peace and harmony but strife and discord. Cassirer's criticism of religion deserves to be quoted in full:

> Religion remains a riddle not only in a theoretical but also in an ethical sense. It is fraught with theoretical antinomies and with ethical contradictions. It promises us a communion with nature, with men, with supernatural powers and the gods themselves. Yet its effect is the very opposite. In its concrete appearance, it becomes the source of the most profound dissensions and fanatic struggles among men. Religion claims to be in possession of an absolute truth, but its history is a history of errors and heresies. It gives us the promise and prospect of a transcendent world, far beyond the limit of our human experience—and it remains human, all too human.[5]

It is certainly a devastating criticism, and as it has been made by a leading thinker of the present age it deserves our serious consideration. To examine it, point by point, will take us far afield. We can only indicate the general line our defence of *dīn*, as distinguished from religion, should take. The difficulty with Professor Cassirer is, as is the case with most of the critics of religion, that he has not studied *dīn* as such but some particular religions, and those too which were either man-made or the revealed ones, though true in their origin, were subsequently vitiated by human interpolations. He would but have reached a different conclusion if he had studied *dīn*. A true religion, if at all *dīn* is styled so, is not a riddle; it rather solves so many riddles of man and the universe. There are no antinomies in a true religion. On the other hand, it reconciles contradictions in life and harmonises the opposites in human behaviour. It is true that religion has bred strife in the past in human society and that the religious communities have been torn by dissensions. But that is the result of the imperfect vision of truth entertained by each contending group. *Dīn*, on the other hand, breeds humility and modesty, not

arrogance and presumption. Men have certainly fought among themselves in the name of religion. Their motives were political or economic, masquerading as religious. But the man believing in *dīn* is unwilling to impose his views on others. Finally, *dīn* involves the belief in a transcendent world but it is wrong to say that this transcendent world is separate and remote from and unconnected with the world of human experience. The transcendent world of *dīn* is only an aspect of the same Reality of which the world of the senses is another aspect. In fact, they interpenetrate each other and belong to the same Supreme Reality. *Dīn* teaches us that the sensible world is an abstraction from Reality and that we should adjust ourselves to the whole concrete Reality and not to one of its aspects. We agree with Professor Cassirer that "religion" (*dīn,* as we call it) is "human, all too human." Its function is to regulate human life in such a way that the individual develops his personality and becomes a useful member of society. In order to attain this objective, it gives what may be termed *permanent values*, which no other source of knowledge can provide. It exhorts man to conquer the forces of nature, since the position it assigns to him in the universe is next to God, and to utilise the power so acquired for the development of the whole of humanity. It shows him the way to rise above animal level and to live the life of *Man*. It is possible only if he leads his life in conformity with permanent values. There would be no permanent values if there were no *dīn*, and if there were no permanent values mankind will be no better than a herd of beasts. This is the real value and place of *dīn* in human life and activity which has unfortunately escaped the notice of Professor Cassirer.

II. The Self

So far we have been concerned with the Ultimate Reality with its infinity of aspects. One of these aspects is the spatio-temporal world of our experience. Now, we can turn our attention to the human *self* which seeks a

meaningful relationship with Reality. The Real, in relation to the human self, is God, and the self's attitude to the Real is *dīn*. The self is strengthened and enriched through permanent values which are the various attributes of the Real Self called God.

What is the nature of the human self and what is its place in the scheme of the universe? We will, first, state and critically examine the answers which modern science and philosophy have supplied to these questions. In ancient and mediaeval philosophy the self was synonymous with the soul, and the soul was believed to be an indestructible substance which existed before its temporary conjunction with the material body and which survives the dissolution of the body. The notion of the soul was taken over from primitive thought and was refined and elaborated by philosophers. Aristotle was the only great philosopher who rejected this view and propounded a theory more in consonance with natural science. He regarded the soul as the entelechy of the body, and as it was the form of the body, it was also inseparable from it. The soul was thus placed squarely in the system of natural phenomena. However, for centuries after Aristotle, the older view of an independent and supernatural soul was unquestionably accepted by both scientists and philosophers. It was challenged only when modern science was well under way.

In the eighteenth century, the term "self" came into vogue. It had the advantage of being closer to nature than the term "soul" which had a supernaturalistic flavour. The self was regarded as the subject of experience. The unity of consciousness, unique in the world, became intelligible only in the light of a self which owned and held together the various sensations, feelings and ideas which compose consciousness. It was regarded as free and not subject to natural laws. Moreover, it was believed that the self remained unchanged and identical with itself throughout the life-span of the individual. However, the line of thought which began with Locke and culminated in the philosophy of Hume rendered this

conception of the self wholly un-acceptable to English thinkers. Locke conceived the human mind as a blank tablet which passively received impressions from the outside world. The contents of the mind were wholly derived from the external world; it did not itself produce or create anything. It merely received and stored impressions from external objects and forces. This view totally denies any activity to the mind. Locke held that any idea in the mind which could not be traced to its source in an impression was merely spurious. Berkeley applied this test to the idea of self and reached the conclusion that it was not a valid idea. Nevertheless, he believed that the flow of ideas was orderly and lawful as these existed in the mind of God and were owned by Him.

Hume delivered the *coup de grace* to the popular belief in an independent self. He carried out a penetrating analysis of the mind and found not a shred of evidence for its existence. He affirmed that whenever he looked into his mind he came across a sensation, an image or a feeling, but not the self to which they are supposed to belong. The mind, according to him, is merely a succession of ideas which are related to each other externally by virtue of existing in the same or successive states of consciousness. Being a thoroughgoing empiricist, he could not accept an idea which did not correspond to an actual fact of consciousness. He believed that orderliness and coherence in the contents of the mind could be fully explained in terms of the principles of association. Thereafter, the English empirical thinkers dispensed with the concept of self altogether.

Kant agreed that the self or ego was not a fact of experience. Nevertheless, he believed in a transcendental ego which was the ground of experience. The idealistic philosophers, therefore, continued to speculate about the transcendental self and its relation to experience.

The psychologists, with their naturalistic outlook, found the concept of a transcendental self as of no use to them. They confined themselves to the study of the

facts of experience. However, as they found that the contents of the mind were not disconnected but centred round an "I" or ego, they developed the concept of the empirical self. They set themselves to solve the problems of the emergence of the empirical self and the changes it undergoes in the course of mental development. However, as psychology attained the status of a full-fledged science, even the concept of an empirical self was discarded as being associated with ideas of permanence and stability.

In modern psychology the concept of personality has supplanted the older concept of self. The psychologist now studies the origin of personality and the process of its development as well as the process of its disintegration in abnormal cases. Personality is conceived not as an entity but as the form or pattern which the raw material of the mind assumes when it is organised. The organisation of the instinctive urges, tendencies and capacities which constitute the biological equipment of the individual proceeds apace during the formative years of life. According to the view which is most widely held, the ground-plan of personality is laid during the first five years of life. Two factors, the physiological and the social, determine the farther course of personality development. The physiologists hold that the harmones secreted by the endocrine glands play a decisive role in the growth and normal functioning of personality. Social psychologists, on the other hand, tend to attach greater importance to the social milieu in which the human child grows up. Personality, they believe, emerges through the process of socialisation. The child internalises the group code and the social norms which immediately begin to regulate his instinctive urges and motives. The group also assigns to him a particular role, and the child develops the capacities and gives free scope to the tendencies which he needs for playing the role successfully.

Freud has constructed a theory of the origin of personality which, though not universally accepted, is generally

regarded as a valuable contribution to this field of investigation. He attached great importance to home influences for personality. His theory throws light on why man clings so tenaciously to his moral code even when it is detrimental to his interests and even when his reason does not approve of it. It is because the moral code does not enter the child's mind by way of his intellect, which is still immature, but is received by and takes root in the emotional part of his nature. The child loves both his father and mother—but in different ways. His love for the mother is of the possessive kind. He wants the mother to be always with him, to minister to his needs as soon as they arise. This love is also libidinal or has an element of sexuality in it. The mother is the individual's first love object. The child's love for the father, on the other hand, is ambivalent, or has an ingredient of hostility in it. The child feels the father to be an obstacle in the gratification of his wishes and considers him as his rival for the mother's love. He naturally takes up a hostile attitude to the father. However, he soon finds that this hatred of his father draws upon him strong social disapproval. The contradictory impulses of love and hatred directed towards the same person lead to a severe conflict in the child's mind, which he is incapable of resolving himself rationally. He resolves it by repressing his hostility to the father. The repressed impulse and the ideas associated with it form the Oedipus complex. The father's image and the moral code, of which the father was the chief exponent, sink into the child's unconscious and constitute the super-ego or, in ordinary language, the conscience. As the child, actuated by fear, unquestioningly had obeyed the father, so he now has no choice but to obey the imperatives of the super-ego which, he feels, have their source outside himself. His attitude to his father is transferred to the super-ego which is based on the repressed image of the father. This, according to Freud, is the secret of the powerful influence that the conscience exerts on the mind of the individual.

Sociologists maintain that human personality takes

root in a social environment and is shaped by social forces. According to this point of view, the individual plays a negligible role in his own development. He remains passive while society moulds him into the form which happens to enjoy social approval at the moment. The inadequacy of this view is obvious, for we see it happening before our eyes that two children, brought up in the same social environment, develop different types of personality. If the sociologists were right, the members of a particular social group would be indistinguishable from each other in respect of personality. As compared to the sociologists', the psychologists' view is more in agreement with observed facts. According to this view, personality develops as the result of the reactions of the individual himself. The important thing for personality is not the social influence to which the individual is exposed, but the way in which he reacts to it. Man, therefore, does not passively receive but actively acquires personality. The biological factor operating in man is of crucial importance for personality development. However, it will not do to disregard the social factor altogether. Man has, perforce, to accommodate himself to the demands of the group on which he is dependent and which provides him with security and the necessities of life. According to the psychological theory, which does justice to both factors, personality is the product of the interaction between the hereditary constitution of man and his social milieu.

Science aims not merely at knowledge but at precise knowledge. Precision is possible only when the subject-matter is susceptible of measurement and when the technique of measurement has been perfected. For a long time it was believed that quantitative methods could not be applied to so elusive and imponderable a phenomenon as personality. We cannot deny the tribute of praise to the psychologists who, with commendable patience, hard work and ingenuity, have tried to solve this difficult problem. They first analysed personality into traits and then discovered that each trait had a certain dimension. The next step was to devise and perfect the

technique of accurately measuring each trait. By combining the results of measurement we get an overall picture of personality or personality profile, as it is termed. Rohrschach, Thurstone, Likert and Goddard have achieved remarkable success in this field. The modern psychologist now has a repertoire of special techniques for measuring each of the basic traits of human personality.

However, although the application of scientific methods to the study of personality has yielded a rich harvest of results, most of these have little bearing on the questions which loom large in religion. What it is in man which impels him to embark on the perilous and seemingly desperate enterprise of coming to terms with the Ultimate Reality? Why and how does he hope to fulfil himself by establishing a close and intimate contact with God?

Let us first see how far psychology and philosophy can help us to answer these questions. When we question the psychologist on the point, he refers us to the psychological definition of personality. Unfortunately, there is no definition which is accepted by all the major psychologists of the present age. Personality has been defined as the total quality of the individual's behaviour. This definition brings out both the unity and complexity of personality. Personality is inclusive, so that no important motive, tendency or capacity remains outside it, and yet it has a unity which is not paralleled anywhere else in nature. For our present purpose it will suffice to state one more definition. Personality is the integration of the individual's measurable characteristics and motivational undercurrents. This process begins in early childhood and proceeds, at first slowly and then at an accelerated pace, during adolescence until the emergence of the mature personality of the adult. Thereafter too, personality continues to undergo at least some changes, though slight, throughout the life of the individual. With senility, or through disease or traumatic experiences, a process in the reverse direction may set in. The process of disintegration may lead to the splitting or

even fragmentation of personality. Cases of dual and multiple personality have been observed and intensively studied by psychiatrists; therapeutic techniques have also been devised for reintegrating the split personality.

We now see clearly that there is nothing substantial about personality as it is conceived by the psychologist. It is merely a structural form which mental elements may take on or discard.

Turning to the philosophers, we find that the Existentialists refuse to believe in any transcendental entity. They refuse to take a single step beyond the world of experience. For them too, the human self does not partake of Reality.

The Logical Positivists promptly reject any concept which cannot be traced back to a fact of experience. Their vision too does not extend beyond the horizon of experience. Whatever is not an experiential fact they dismiss as non-existent.

At this point, it is natural to ask whether *dīn* can get along with the concept of personality or of empirical self. Obviously it cannot. It can have no use for the ephemeral self of the psychologist or Logical Positivist. It needs something real which can enter into a meaningful transaction with the ultimately Real. It needs self which exists in mental phenomena and is also their underlying ground. *Dīni* activity is the expression of the reality in man and it is directed to the Real in the universe. The concept of personality may be scientifically sound, but somehow it leaves us dissatisfied. We feel that the object we pursued has eluded us and what we have grasped is a mere shadow. We suspect that scant attention has been paid to the depth factors in human life. The psychologist works from the surface of the mind downwards, and often fails to plumb the depths of the human mind.

At a later point in our discussion we will examine the Qur'ānic concept of the self. Here let us pause to consider the effect of the scientific view of the self on the life

of the modern man. The modern man lives at a superficial level. He pursues petty and selfish ends. No wonder that he is discontented and unhappy. His deepest cravings are left unsatisfied. Thus he is in conflict both with himself and with his fellow beings. In this connection, Iqbal's remarks deserve to be quoted in full:

> Thus, wholly overshadowed by the results of his intellectual activity, the modern man has ceased to live soulfully, i.e. from within. In the domain of thought he is living in open conflict with himself; and in the domain of economic and political life he is living in open conflict with others. He finds himself unable to control his ruthless egoism and his infinite gold hunger which is gradually killing all higher strivings in him and bringing him but lifeweariness. Absorbed in the 'fact,' that is to say, the optically present source of sensation, he is entirely cut off from the unplumbed depths of his own being.[6]

Modern man is certainly a prey to the two types of conflict which Iqbal has mentioned. For that matter, man may always have suffered from such a conflict. Modern civilisation, however, seems to have accentuated it. Nobody can deny that conflict is an active source of misery and unhappiness. Is mental conflict due to extraneous factors or to those which are inherent in the mind? Iqbal, through long meditation on the problems of life, was admirably fitted to pronounce a balanced judgment on this issue. The passage quoted above makes it clear that he blames conflict on modern civilisation which puts a premium on the selfish side of man and provides satisfaction for only a segment of the self instead of for the whole of it. This view deserves serious consideration. To judge the question in all its aspects, however, we cannot disregard the views of two psychologists who have made a solid contribution in this field.

The first psychologist who explored the depths of the human mind was Freud. On the basis of extensive clinical work, he advanced a theory which illumined many points which hitherto had remained obscure. He preferred the term *Psyche*, as it had no metaphysical implications. The Psyche, he believed, is the seat of a number

of instinctive drives, each of which blindly strives to abolish or reduce the tension which accompanies it. Each of these drives is invested with a fund of psychical energy. This psychical energy, as it is expended in activities directed to the attainment of relief or pleasure, is termed the *libido*. Consciousness originates on the surface of the Psyche, which is also the surface of the organism, as it receives the impact of the environmental forces. As consciousness is in direct contact with the environment, it assumes the role of mediator between the interior of the Psyche and the environment. The conscious personality puts a curb on the instinctive drives and compels them to defer satisfaction to a suitable time. The formation of the Oedipus complex gives rise to the super-ego, which is the third sub-system of the Psyche. The super-ego, as it embodies the group code and group ideals, pursues ends which have social approval. The Psyche has three components—the *Id* (the instinctual drives of Psyche which are impersonal), the ego and the super-ego.

The libido finds its typical expression in the sexual activity of the adult. It can, therefore, be regarded as sex energy. For this reason, Freud was, rather unfairly, accused of being a pansexualist.

The ego and super-ego possess no libidinal energy at the beginning. But libido itself is highly transferable. It can be detached from the impulse which owns it and can be transferred to another which society approves of. This process is called sublimation. The ego suppresses the libidinal urges and diverts the energy thus released into socially approved channels. Civilisation is built up on the repression of the sex drive. The sexual impulses, however, cannot be extinguished. In this way arises a never-ending conflict between the demands of the libido and the demands of civilised society. Civilisation, however, rests on insecure ground. The repressed sex urge may erupt any time and bring down its imposing structure of civilisation. Internal conflict or conflict in the mind of man is the price we have to pay for civilisation.

This conflict is accentuated with every increase in the complexity of social organisation. However, this is not the whole story. Freud believes that as a living organism man has inherited a deeper and more fundamental conflict. He defines instinct as the primitive tendency to revert to the previous state of existence and the former level of functioning. A living organism is constantly in an unstable condition. With the first stirrings of life in the erstwhile inanimate mass of matter, it felt the imperative urge to revert to the previous state of stability and lifelessness. Freud believes that the death urge lies at the root of our being. Death promises the final release from tension which is inseparable from life. The longing for death is the deepest longing in the Psyche. We are reminded of Buddha's view of life and his longing for *Nirvana*. Freud may have been influenced by Schopenhauer's pessimistic philosophy, as, according to him, we are called upon to say *Nay* to life. Consciously we may be aiming at and striving for self-development, but unconsciously we are moving towards the goal of self-annihilation. Which of the three alternatives open to us should we choose—acceptance, rejection or non-committal attitude? It may be pointed out that man naturally shrinks back from the prospect of extinction, that he passionately longs for immortality and that he tenaciously clings to beliefs which are related to the continuation of life beyond death. We may also note that eschatology forms an essential part of every religion the world over, with the solitary exception of Buddhism. The highest flights of poetic imagination have often been inspired by the hope that death is not the end of life but a transition to a higher state of life.

We may briefly comment on Freud's treatment of religion. For him religion is an illusion which man has created to obtain solace and comfort in a world which is full of misery and affliction. Man's strongest desires are frustrated and their energy is dammed up. It finds an outlet in imaginative activity which creates fantasies. Those repressed desires which are denied gratification in the real world find it on the ideal plane. The Imago,

or the image of the father which lies buried deep in the unconscious, is projected on to the cosmos as God. Dr. William Brown, himself a psychoanalyst, has taken strong exception to this view. On the basis of his clinical work he affirms that a complex usually disappears when the patient is psychoanalysed. Religion, however, does not disappear, but may even be strengthened in the mind of the patient who has been psychoanalysed.

We may consider the views of another major psychologist, Carl Jung. Let us see what light he throws on the causes of inter-personal and intra-personal conflicts. His theory of personality is, in some ways, more profound than the psychoanalytic theory. In his view, the human personality is a complex system which comprises a number of sub-systems. Conflict may arise between any one of these and others. Jung's theory of personality is highly complex and intricate, but it is not necessary for us to consider it in detail. We will confine ourselves to that part of it which is relevant to our immediate purpose. Jung's observations on the chief source of discontent in the present age deserve careful consideration: these are that the opposing trends in the several systems are likely to clash with one another. The conscious desire may be in opposition to the unconscious.

A man may consciously desire wealth and may devote himself to making money. But his unconscious may harbour the wish to become an artist. Such a man, even if he becomes a millionaire, remains unhappy because the unconscious wish is frustrated. The remedy for conflict lies in personality itself. It possesses a transcendent function. This function is endowed with the capacity to unite the opposing trends of the several systems within and to work towards an ideal goal of perfect wholeness (selfhood).

Jung's conception of the symbol is of particular significance for religion, as religious truths are generally expressed in symbolical language. Jung affirms that a symbol has two aspects—retrospective and prospective. In its former aspect, the symbol expresses the stored-up

racial wisdom. In its prospective aspect it represents a level of development that is far ahead of man's present status. Man's destiny, the highest evolution of the Psyche, is marked out for him by symbols. We thus see that in religion symbols represent higher levels of development.

Another view of Jung has a direct bearing on religion. He believes that a fundamental urge in man leads him to seek unification with the universe. He passionately desires to be at one with it. The desire to achieve unification with Reality must be satisfied if man is to win peace and happiness. But because the conditions of life today frustrate this desire, the modern man feels discontented and unhappy, although he does not know the reason for this state of his mind.

III. The Qur'ānic Concept of the Self

We have now the proper background for grasping, judging and appreciating the Qur'ānic concept of the self. We have deliberately chosen the older term "self" in preference to the terms "personality," "psyche" and "empirical self" which are current in modern psychology and philosophy. The reasons for this choice may be stated here briefly. The term "self" is in closer correspondence with the Qur'ānic term "*nafs*," than any of the terms which have come into vogue recently. Secondly, each of these terms suggests an ephemeral phenomenon which appears at a certain point of time, and after a short period vanishes into the thin air, leaving behind it no trace of its existence. Such a phenomenon cannot enjoy the status of a moral agent or a responsible being. What it is and what it achieves are of no significance either for itself or for the world. It is like the flame of a candle which shines for a moment and then is quickly swallowed up by the surrounding darkness. Finally, being unreal itself, it cannot enter into a meaningful relationship and co-operation with the Real. The characterisation of the self, which we find in the Qur'ān,

will enable us to form an adequate idea of the self and a just estimate of its capabilities.

1. The self partakes of Reality and consequently enjoys permanence and stability. It retains its identity throughout its career. The trials which it undergoes and the influences to which it is exposed change it without transforming it into something different from itself. It starts its career in an undeveloped form but equipped with immense potentialities. It may or may not actualise these potentialities but it never ceases to be itself. It is not a passive material which is moulded by external forces; it is essentially active and dynamic. Its typical activity is *dīni* activity in the highest sense of the term, viz., the development and actualising of its basic characteristics, and thereby "drawing closer" to the Most Perfect Self—God—whose attributes serve as an objective standard for the human self, and thus tasting the joy of proximity to Him. Death does not terminate the activity of the self; it is but an episode in its career.

2. Further, the self, as conceived in the Qur'ān, is free. Freedom is an inalienable property of the self. Although it operates in the sphere of nature, its activity flows from its own nature and is not determined by natural causes. As Dr. Rhine, in his book, *New World of the Mind*, aptly remarks: "There is something operative in man that transcends the laws of matter."

It is because the self is free that it functions as a moral agent. Duties and obligations have no meaning for a being which is completely determined. If the self were not free, it would be insensitive to the demands of "ought" and would respond only to the demands of "must." Its sense of responsibility springs from its sense of freedom; it is capable of leading a moral life only because it is free. This view implies that the self has a real choice of action. It can choose any one of the alternative courses of action open to it, and responsibility for its choice rests squarely on it.

Of course, the self does not enjoy absolute and un-

limited freedom. Its freedom is circumscribed by the conditions under which it lives. The world of fact checks and restrains its activities in various ways and in various degrees. The self chafes under these restraints. It flourishes only in an atmosphere of freedom. In a highly regimented society its sphere of action may be subjected to increasing shrinkage. Such a society discourages all kinds of self-expression and curbs liberty of action. Under these conditions, the self begins to languish. It can regain its vitality only by regaining its freedom. The self burgeons, blossoms and fructifies in lofty thoughts and noble actions only in an atmosphere of freedom. Freedom is in the essence of the self and cannot be extinguished under external compulsion. The self, however, feels cramped and frustrated in a regimented and totalitarian society, or an "other-directed conformism," or system of religion. The State, whose power has increased enormously in recent times, poses a serious threat to the integrity of the self. It has been steadily and relentlessly encroaching on the domain of the self. The individual's freedom has been seriously curtailed by the modern State, armed as it is with scientific techniques of suggestion, propaganda and brain washing. The government can now influence the individual's mind to a degree which was undreamt of in the past. It can control not only man's overt actions but his inner thoughts as well. In these circumstances, the only citadel in which freedom can take refuge is *dīn*. It ensures complete freedom for self within the framework of permanent values. *Dīn* should, therefore, be defended at any cost, as the region where man can still enjoy freedom and function as a self and not merely as a cog in a machine.

3. Again, the self as viewed by the Qur'ān is not static. It possesses infinite capacity for development. With its own efforts (of course on the lines demarcated by permanent values), it rises to higher and higher planes of existence. The Qur'ān says, "Verily We will raise you to higher and higher levels" (84 : 19). The self fulfils itself by developing and actualising its potentialities. With death, man does not cease to exist but passes on to a

higher plane of existence. The Qur'ān has prescribed *dīn*, or the way of life, which fits man for the higher level. When man is elevated to the higher level, he feels as if the gate of Heaven had been thrown open to him. On the other hand, when he falls to a lower level he feels that he has been flung into Hell.

The Qur'ān opens out a vast vista of development to man. No term has been set to his progress. Man's destiny is marked out for him in symbols. To understand the symbols, however, we need true insight. When we can catch a glimpse of the higher level, then only does the symbol which represents it becomes intelligible. It is futile to discuss a symbol when we have no inkling of the stage to which it refers. The Qur'ān, when studied intelligently, provides us with the insight to understand the true meanings of these symbols.

4. The self has the capacity for value-experience. It is sensitive to the higher qualities of its experience and appreciates their value. Value-experience is non-existent at the sub-human level. It becomes possible only when the self has emerged. Value-experience may be of a low or high order. The higher in the scale an experience is, the more satisfying it is found to be. When the self is fit to rise to a higher plane, it craves for a value-experience higher than that with which it had been content hitherto. An experience of high value enriches and elevates the self.

5. The self develops mainly through its own efforts. It rises or falls through its moral or immoral actions. Says the Qur'ān: "The self (*nafs*) owns only that which it earns" (74 : 38) and it changes through what it assimilates, good or bad. The self is subject to the law of requital. Its *a'māl-ul-ḥasanah* enhance its worth and *a'māl-us-sayyi'ah* degrade it. God never does wrong to the self. The Qur'ān is explicit on this point. If the self is degraded, it is its own doing. External forces cannot touch the self and God never deals with it unjustly. So the self is affected by nothing except the

results of its own actions. Suffering is the fruit of *a'māl-us-sayyi'ah*.

6. Finally, the self partakes of Realily and mirrors the Divine attributes. "I breathed My *Rūḥ*—Divine Energy—into him (man)," says the Qur'ān (15 : 29). The *Nabi* said, "Cultivate in yourselves those qualities which reflect the Divine attributes." By cultivating those qualities, the self develops and draws, so to say, closer to God. Through *a'māl-us-sayyi'ah*, it gets further away from God and Reality. *A'māl-ul-ḥasanah*, as has already been observed, strengthen the self and *a'māl-us-sayyi'ah* weaken it. The distance between God and the human self is increased by the latter and is decreased by the former which cultivate Divine qualities. This is the teaching of the Qur'ān. Moreover, the self becomes more and more real as it develops into itself the attributes of God, and more and more unreal as it recedes from Him. The Divine attributes serve as an objective model after which man can strive to fashion himself.

IV. God and Man

The self can enter into meaningful relationship only with other selves, and for realising itself it has to depend upon the help, sympathy and co-operation of other beings which have essentially the same nature as its own. The self, therefore, seeks out other selves and prospers in their company. It yearns to be in the midst of beings with whom it can communicate and in whose aspirations and activities it can participate. For this reason man nowhere leads a solitary life, but is everywhere found to be a member of a social group. Only in society can man enjoy mental health and function efficiently.

But, above all things, the self longs for co-operation, i.e., being a co-worker, with the Supreme Self or God. Such co-operation sustains and vivifies it. Without this, the self droops, languishes and loses the zest for life and activity. It is happy only when it is engaged in purposive activity, and happiest when it has the feeling of

participation in the cosmic purpose. A compelling urge in the self impels it to seek the meaning of life and the world. The physical world, on the face of it, is purposeless and meaningless. *Īmān* makes life and the world meaningful. For this reason the self clings passionately and tenaciously to the belief in the Supreme Being, the most perfect and ideal Self.

The idea of God that the Qur'ān presents is both simple and sublime. God is the creative force which is at work throughout the universe. God manifests Himself in the visible world of nature. The Qur'ān says, "Whithersoever you turn, you look at the countenance of God" (2:115). The Qur'ān calls upon us to reflect and ponder over the grand natural phenomena—the earth and sky, wind and rain, sun, moon and stars. All nature reflects the beauty and glory of God. Special attention is drawn to God's attribute of *Rubūbīyah*, according to which He sustains and fosters every being, and thus the lowliest organism develops and attains maturity and relative perfection. Because God controls and governs the world, the world process is not purposeless and meaningless. God guides and directs the cosmic process to a grand destiny. In human history a Divine Plan is being worked out, slowly but surely, and a splendid destiny awaits man. In the Qur'ān, God is presented as both Immanent and Transcendent. He works in the world as a creative urge and also exists outside it as its ground. He manifests Himself in nature and yet transcends it. He is eternal and yet in the changing world every day a new phase of His glory is presented to our view (55:29).

The Qur'ān sheds new light on the relation between man and God. It is one of partnership, although one of the partners is immeasurably higher than the other. The wide gulf that separates man from God is, however, not an insuperable obstacle to fruitful co-operation between them. Man is endowed with a self, and we have seen that a self can co-operate only with another self. By virtue of possessing a self, man can, in his humble capacity, work together with God in the carrying

out of the Divine Plan. Man has a stake in the future of the world and as a free self has the capacity to determine, however slightly, what that future is to be. It gives man a new sense of dignity to feel that he is actively contributing to the success of the Divine Plan. The Qur'ān earnestly appeals to man to work with God in bringing about a world in which justice and goodness are not merely ideas but realities. He can and should contribute to the sum-total of goodness in the universe. Man's acquisitive instincts make him selfish and greedy, and bring him into conflict with his fellow beings. As such he cannot fit into the Divine scheme. However, by encouraging and fostering his creative instincts, which enable him to create values, he will be able to work in harmony with the moral order of the universe and will move steadily towards the goal of full self-realisation and perfection. At the same time, he will be enriching the world with values and making it a fit abode for men, who are both free and good. He will be taking his modest share in accomplishing the Divine purpose. The Qur'ān calls upon man to co-operate with other men in the pursuit of the good. "Help one another in *birr* and *taqwa,*" says the Qur'ān (5 : 2).

Evolution proceeded at an extremely slow pace in the past ages, and, often, a million years passed before a higher quality emerged in the animal world. With the emergence of a free conscious self, the prospect is much brighter. When free men, under the guidance of God, are participating in the world process and are deliberately furthering it, the pace of evolution is sure to be accelerated. By following the right path, which the Qur'ān has shown us clearly, we can develop all our latent potentialities and march forward to the ultimate goal of perfection.

As man owns a self, he has a natural affinity with God, the Absolute Self. This affinity confers on him the right and lays on him the duty of working in harmony with the will and purpose of God. By working in this way man not only realises himself but also gives an impetus

to the progress of human society.

The way in which the Absolute Self manifests its attributes in the universe evokes feelings of awe, reverence and admiration in man. As man naturally imitates what he admires, he strives to develop himself and be as like God as is possible for a finite being to be. God serves as a model and also as an objective standard with which man can compare himself and judge his progress in self-realisation. Man needs God as a co-worker and as an ideal.

V. *Religion or "Dīn"*

As already explained in the Introduction, the Qur'ānic term for religion is "*dīn.*" *Dīn*, however, is not merely a synonym for religion. *Dīn* is a broader and deeper concept than religion as it is commonly understood. Religion usually means a set of dogmas, an elaborate ritual and a host of trivial practices. Ordinary activities of life are hedged in by a number of rules and taboos. Simple acts such as eating and marrying are surrounded by a complex ceremonial. Man's conduct in everyday life is regulated in the minutest detail. *Dīn*, as presented in the Qur'ān, is not a matter of ritual or ceremonial. It is concerned with the broad aim of life and the programme of action by which that aim can be attained. *Dīn* gives full scope to man's initiative and discretion. It is meant for a free and intelligent person, a person who has the courage to think, judge and act for himself. *Dīn* offers broad principles which give guidance to man in the adventure of life and which enable him to attain the goal of self-realisation and social welfare. These principles, however, are not meant to be followed blindly. They are to be applied with intelligence and forethought. Iqbal, who has grasped the essence of *dīn*, remarks that it enunciates "basic principles of a universal import directing the evolution of human society on a spiritual basis."[7] Hard and fast rules, therefore, have no place in *dīn*. *Dīn* has fully served its purpose if it has delineated

the ideal of life in bold lines, has explicated the principles governing its pursuit and has inspired in man zeal and devotion for the ideal. The *dīn* of Islam does not lay on man a heavy burden of rules and regulations. It merely gives him guidance where he needs it and provides him with permanent values. Man should seek the aid of *dīn* in obtaining inspiration and vision ; he should look elsewhere if he is interested only in the performance of ritual and ceremonial. Looked at from this angle, *dīn* is not an opiate, as the Marxians contend, but a stimulant and a spur to action. *Dīn* does not induce in us contentment with things as they are ; it spurs us on to efforts directed to the establishment of a better order of society. On the other hand, religion inculcates a passive resignation and complete submission to authority, however oppressive and unjust it may be. At best, it counsels us to have recourse to passive resistance. *Dīn* calls upon us to fight against injustice and oppression and to actively promote the cause of justice.

Another characteristic of *dīn* distinguishes it from religion in its general sense. *Dīn* is forward-looking : the ideal it embodies beckons to man from the future. Like a beacon it guides his steps towards a glorious destiny. *Dīn* does not want man to keep gazing, awe-struck, at some golden age in the remote and dim past : man's duty is not to retrace his steps but to advance in the direction of futurity. *Dīn* is prospective, not retrospective. It is a *vis a front* not a *vis a tergo*. That is why *dīn* is a source of hope and attaches supreme importance to hope ; so much so that to relinquish hope is reckoned as *kufr* (the Qur'ān, 39 : 53 ; 12 : 87).

Finally, the Qur'ān insists upon explicit conviction, which it calls *īmān*. A number of verses in the Qur'ān make it clear that compulsion has no place in the sphere of *dīn*. *Dīn* must be accepted freely and voluntarily by man. A religion which is forcibly imposed on an individual has no value for him or for the world at large. Man has the right to exercise free choice in the matter of *dīn*. "There is no compulsion in the matter of *dīn*," asserts

the Qur'ān (2 : 256). If this command is accepted and obeyed in good faith, it will certainly put an end to all fanaticism and religious disputes. Understood rightly, this injunction is the charter of freedom of thought and expression even to those who do not believe in it. *Dīn*, therefore, leaves the power to choose and act in man's hands. It is through his personal initiative, strength of character, courage, fortitude, determination and ceaseless efforts that man can shape his destiny and can win for himself a future which must necessarily belong to him if he accepts and follows the Divine revelation in all sincerity.

VI. Islam

The Qur'ānic concept of *dīn* has been elucidated in the foregoing section. Obviously, Islam fulfils all the requirements of *dīn*. Islam, as Iqbal puts it, "is neither dogma, nor priesthood, nor ritual."[8] It is much more than any of these or all of these. It is the vivid sense of God's directive force and unflinching working of His laws. It is absolute *īmān* in God's wisdom and His purpose. It is hearty participation in the upward progressive trend and movement of life and the world viewed as the expression of God's creative force. Islam stands for life-fulfilment and rejects life-denial as unworthy of man. It commands us to face facts and not to shrink from them and take refuge in fantasy, and requires us to control and harness natural forces for achieving our ends. Asceticism, quietism and monasticism are all repugnant to Islam. Islam lays stress on social life and on its value for man, and does not regard the body as an evil and as an impediment to "spiritual" progress. It wants man to respect the rights of the body as well as the rights of the self. For this reason, Islam does not approve of self-abnegation and self-mortification. There is nothing mysterious in it and it has no place for mysticism. It aims at the establishment of a social order based on permanent values in which all its members act as free agents striving for a higher and

noble cause of making man's abode on this earth more beautiful, and making him fit for further evolutionary stages of life.

Islam, as a living force, will continue to play a vital role in the moral uplift and social, cultural and political unification of mankind. It will continue to make valuable contributions to the knowledge and culture of mankind. Above all, it will continue to enrich the "spiritual"[9] life of man and thus strengthen and elevate his self or his personality.

References

1. When Iqbal uses the word "religion" with reference to Islam, it should be understood as *Dīn.*

2. M. Iqbal, *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam,* p. 172.

3. Ibid., p. 2.

4. Ibid.

5. Ernst Cassirer, *An Essay on Man,* p. 72.

6. Iqbal, op. cit., p. 177.

7. Ibid., p. 170.

8. Ibid., p. 178.

9. The word "spirit" or "spiritual" has special significance in Christian ideology and has not been used by the Qur'ān anywhere in that sense. The Qur'ān speaks of man's material and moral progress or degeneration, and not "spiritual." Even about Muḥammad (P) it says, "And surely thou hast sublime *morals*" (68 : 4). The word "spiritual" has been used in this book following its common usage in the English language, i.e. as against purely physical, and should be taken in that sense only wherever it occurs with reference to Islam or the Muslims.

Chapter III

THE SELF OF MAN AND ITS DESTINY

I. Self and Physical Body

In the previous chapter, we have briefly considered the psychological account of the origin and development of human personality or self. The terms are interchangeable in so far as they refer to the unified and integrated essence of man, and it is immaterial which one is employed. However, the term "self" will be preferred whenever the reference is to the essence of man conceived as an autonomous entity which, though it has developed in a physical matrix, is yet capable of surviving it and continuing its own independent existence. Our main concern, now, will be centred on the nature and destiny of self.

Personality or self is no doubt centred in the physical organism. But there are valid grounds for believing that it is not identical with the body. That man is something more than his physical self, can easily be seen from the fact that whereas his body is continually changing, both in its inner structure as well as in its outward appearance, his self remains unchanged. What, then, is his real self? The answer is, the ego or "I" of whose real nature we know nothing except in so far as it expresses itself in its behaviour or activities which are mediated by the body. Biology tells us that the human body is an organic structure, composed of millions of living cells which are continually changing. The moment a cell passes out of existence, it is replaced by a new one. In technical language, the process of katabolism is counterbalanced by the process of anabolism. Disintegration is quickly

followed by re-integration. As a result of this, new cells are being produced and taking the place of older ones. Destruction and construction go side by side. The human body is, therefore, continually changing into a new one, so much so that it does not take more than three years, or seven as some believe, to renew itself completely.

Now, if by "self" we mean the physical self, namely, the body which undergoes a complete change after every period of three or seven years, it necessarily follows that the individual too ceases to exist as often as his body does so. However improbable it may be, if man is equated with his body the conclusion is inescapable that he changes into a new individual every three or seven years. The practical consequences of such a view can be easily imagined. Suppose A lends £10 to B. A, being a friend of B, waits patiently for several years, hoping that B will pay back the money as soon as it is convenient for him to do so. When A thinks that he had waited long enough, he demands payment. B, however, tells him that the two individuals between whom the said transaction took place have ceased to exist. A may insist that he remembers the transaction and that B is the same person who borrowed the money, but B may emphatically maintain that he himself is not the person who borrowed the money and so is under no obligation to pay it back. Again, suppose a lady tells her husband one fine morning that the woman he had married ten or twelve years back has now changed into an entirely new woman and, therefore, the marriage contract does not stand and she is no longer his wife. It is obvious that if by "self" we mean the physical self, such absurd conclusions are inescapable. However seriously the scientist may assert that the physical self is transformed in a short period of time and hence we are not responsible for what we did before that period, nobody, not even the scientist himself, can accept this as a right principle of conduct. For, however the body may change, our personal identity is not affected thereby. We continue to be the same till the time of our death. The physical self, the body, might change but

not the real self, the ego or the "I" which make me what I am. To quote Brightman:

> If a person is not a true identical unity through all the changes in his experience, then spiritual development is impossible. Moral growth, for example, rests on the postulate that I am responsible to myself for the past purposes and contracts; yet if I am not the one who entertained those purposes and made those contracts, I experience neither responsibility nor continuous growth.[1]

To this the scientist may retort that science is the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, and truth must be accepted even if it entails unpleasant consequences. He may point out that his interest is in science, not in ethical conduct and social relationships. But is the scientist prepared to admit that, according to his theory, he has changed six or seven times into quite a different individual? Will he disown his entire career and say that it was some other person who went to school and yet another who worked in the laboratory as full-fledged scientist a dozen years back? Obviously not. Again, the replacement of the old by the new cells, which results in the complete transformation of the body, is a slow, gradual and orderly process, so much so that we speak of the change as taking place in the same body. Does it not show that there is something which remains constant in the changing body? How are we to account for it? Is it because the dying cells have, somehow, transmitted the physical identity of the body to the new cells? This is certainly not possible. What then is the secret of the identity of the self? The answer, which at the least is not improbable, is that behind the physical self there is a self which is far more real, though far more subtle, which we know as the ego, the "I" or the personality. It is the "I," or ego, which is at the root of my individuality and in which all change seems to be grounded, for it continues to endure in spite of the changes continually taking place in my mind as well as in my body. Berdyaev has rightly observed that: "Personality is changelessness in change."[2] All my acts, thoughts, feelings, cognitions and volitions are owned by the ego which enables me to retain my identity in the midst of changes which are

transforming my body into something different. Hegel observes: "I have many ideas, a wealth of thoughts in me, and yet I remain, in spite of this variety, one."[3] In his thought-provoking work *On Selfhood and Godhood*, Professor A.C. Campbell has devoted a whole chapter to a discussion of the question whether a physical body is essential to the self, and has replied in the negative. "Young children," says he, "experience organic sensations long before they are aware that they have a body."[4] He goes on to say, "There seems to be some evidence of pathological conditions in which there is total suspension of organic sensation and in which the patient is self-conscious." Dr. F.R. Tenant tells us that "when through disease, coenesthesis is in abeyance, a patient will regard his body as a strange and inimical thing, not belonging to him."[5] It is obvious, therefore, that the human self is neither identical with the body nor subject to physical laws. The self is independent of the body and remains unchanged throughout the life of the individual. It is the "I," the ego or my real self, therefore, which makes me take on myself the responsibility of whatever I think, feel or act. As the acts were willed by me, I cannot escape from their consequences, whatever their nature, good or bad. "Without personal identity," as Bradley said, "responsibility is sheer nonsense."[6]

II. Self and Memory

It may be contended, however, that our identity does not depend on the ego, which is only the sum-total of our states of consciousness. It is memory which, by linking our experiences to each other, serves as the basis of our self-identity. If memory is taken away, we would lose our sense of identity. The inadequacy of this view can easily be demonstrated. It is true that the self cannot be conceived as existing outside the course of mental phenomena, as the body cannot be said to be something other than the organs of which it is composed. But just as the living body is something more than the sum of its parts, so the self is more than the mental acts taken

together. Both the mind and body are wholes and must be regarded as such. To analyse them into parts, as if the parts were real and not the wholes, is to miss their real nature. The self, as a whole, possesses a reality of its own. It is the "I" or the self which wills, thinks and feels. It expresses itself in various ways. To affirm the self is to affirm its identity. The point may be easily elucidated. Suppose a man whose hand has been paralysed wants to seize something. He wills to catch it but his hand remains inert. It is obvious that the hand could not have been the willing agent as willing occurs even when the hand has been incapacitated. The willing agent remains although the instrument it usually employed is no longer of any use. Again, the self recalls its past by means of the brain tissues which retain traces of past experiences. If the brain is seriously injured, the self has lost an instrument which was essential for recalling the past. If our radio set is out of order, we cannot listen to the day's broadcast programme, but we do not believe that the broadcasting has been stopped. Again, suppose I am looking at my image in a mirror. If by chance the mirror is shattered, the image too disappears. However, the person who was reflected in the mirror does not disappear. The medium was destroyed but not that which is mediated. The brain is such a medium on which the self impresses its states. The brain does not secrete memory as some physiologists seem to believe. It is the self which has the power to recall the past, though for this it needs the brain. Bergson's observations on this point deserve careful consideration. He says:

> We understand then why a remembrance cannot be the result of a state of the brain. The state of the brain continues the remembrance, it gives it a hold on the present by the materiality which it confers on it but pure memory is a spiritual manifestation. With memory we are in very truth in the domain of spirit.[7]

Dr. Galloway, in the course of an interesting discussion of the problem of immortality, has attempted to answer the question, "Is memory a function of the

brain?" As his view has a direct bearing on the question we are considering, it is quoted in full:

> It may, however, be objected that memory has its basis in neural traces and so cannot survive dissolution of the body. Certainly we are not entitled to say that memory is purely an affair of the mind, for many mental habits appear to be rooted in the structure of the nervous system. And the failure of memory under pathological conditions, or when in old age degeneration of tissue reaches the association areas of the cortex, is positive evidence of some dependence of memory on cerebral traces or processes. The problem turns on the character and degree of this dependence. Now, neural traces are not the sole, nor even the most important, condition of remembering; for if so, memory would depend directly on repetition. But this is plainly not the case. The truth is that memory depends far more on the presence of meaning in the things remembered; and meaning must be referred for its maintenance in the mind to *psychical* not to cerebral dispositions. It is, therefore, possible that the soul, which includes within it the psychical dispositions formed during this life, may carry with it the means of preserving a continuity between the present order and a higher order of existence. If a world of meanings can be maintained by the soul despite the physiological changes of the body in a lifetime, it is conceivable it might be maintained through a more radical transformation. At all events a group of memories might remain, sufficient to give the sense of personal continuity.[8]

In a footnote he has put the matter in a clearer light:

> For instance it is vastly easier to remember a rational sentence after a single hearing than the same number of nonsense words repeated several times.

Galloway has also cited McDougall in his support. No one who is interested in the subject can afford to disregard Professor Erwin Schrcdinger's illuminating and valuable discussion of the point. It is to be found in his small, but highly important book, *What is Life*. Summing up his ideas at the end of the book, he writes:

> Yet each of us has the undisputable impression that the sum total of his own experience and memory forms a unity, quite distinct from that of any other person. He refers to it as "I". What is this "I"?
>
> If you analyse it closely you will, I think, find that it is just a little bit more than a collection of single data (experiences and memories) namely the canvas upon which they are collected. And you will, on close introspection, find that what you really mean by

"I" is that ground stuff upon which they are collected. You may come to a distant country, lose sight of all your friends, may all but forget them; you acquire new friends, you share life with them as intensely as you ever did with your old ones. Less and less important will become the fact that, while living your new life, you still recollect the old one. "The youth that was I," you may come to speak of him in the third person, indeed the protagonist of the novel you are reading is probably nearer to your heart, certainly more intensely alive and better known to you. Yet there has been no intermediate break, no death. And even if a skilled hypnotist succeeded in blotting out entirely all your earlier reminiscences, you would not find that he had killed you. In no case is there a loss of personal existence to deplore.

Nor will there ever be.[9]

It seems highly probable, therefore, that bodily changes cannot radically alter the self. It continues to endure even after the limbs have been amputated, nay it should remain even after the death of whole body. Such, in short, is the "I" or ego—changelessness in change—which itself is the source of its identity.

III. Survival of the Self

The facts cited in the foregoing pages support the view that the Ego or the real self remains unaltered by any changes in the condition of the body, and that it retains its form even after the worst physical injuries. If so, is it not highly probable that the self can withstand even the shock of death? The self's immense capacity for development would be purposeless if it comes to an abrupt end after a brief span of life. It would be logical to believe that the self continues to exist and develop after death, and empirical evidence, though not conclusive, tends to support the view. At least this would be true for the individual who has not neglected the opportunities for development which this life offers. A self which has been sufficiently strengthened in life will be fit to enter on higher planes of existence. Islam holds the individual responsible for equipping himself for a higher life after death. He can do so by realising the powers that are latent in him. Of course, Islam insists that this can

properly be done only in a social environment. In short, it is the duty of society to provide opportunities of self-development to its members and it is their duty severally to turn such opportunities to the full account. To the fully developed personality, death opens out a vista of further development. The following excerpt from Ouspensky's book will serve to clarify this point. Ouspensky has cited Gurdjieff in support of his view:

> If a man is changing every minute, if there is nothing in him that can withstand external influences, it means that there is nothing in him that can withstand death. But if he becomes independent of external influences, if there appears in him something that can live by itself; this something may not die. In ordinary circumstances we die every moment.
>
> External influences change and we change with them, i.e., many of our "Is" die. If a man develops in himself a permanent "I" that can survive a change in external conditions, it can survive the death of the physical body.[10]

Professor Campbell, quoted below, writes to the same effect:

> There can be no ground for asserting that our self expresses all that it is, in the different forms of self-manifestation disclosed by human experience. The self as an ontological entity, as a spiritual substance, may be, for all we can say to the contrary, a being of far richer potency than is, or even can be, revealed under the conditions of human life, in the guise, that is to say of the "empirical self".[11]

He goes on to say:

> I refer to the mind's power of retaining within it, in some form, its past experiences, and utilising them, on receipt of appropriate stimuli, in the course of its future experience.[12]

The following quotation from Dixon also bears on the same point:

> If in the denial of any renewal of life beyond the grave, we do not virtually deny all life's present values, I know not where to find a more resolute denial of them.[13]

Let us now turn to the question of the relation of the human self to the Divine Self which is, no doubt, the perfect self. "He alone is the Eternal, the Living and the Self-Subsistent" (The Qur'ān, 2: 255).

The human self has the capacity to develop itself on the model of the Divine attributes. It then rises higher and higher in the scale of existence. It is a hard task and man should be perpetually on his guard against all that threatens, from within or without, to weaken and emasculate his self. Only the strong self can forge ahead towards the goal of self-realisation. A weak self can easily deviate from the right path. The restrictions which the Qur'ān imposes on the individual are not designed to curb his freedom but to strengthen him and to stiffen his resistance to destructive forces, so that he may form a strong character and build up an enduring personality. Men of weak character often make good resolutions but seldom carry them out. A man may resolve to get up early in the morning; but when the time comes, he lacks the will to leave his comfortable bed. Another man may be determined to keep an appointment; but at the last moment his resolve weakens and he fails to turn up. In both cases the men failed because of a fatal weakness in their character. The discipline of the Qur'ānic way of life is intended to strengthen the self, so that it may successfully resist all forces which threaten its integrity, and remain steadfast in the pursuit of the good. The Qur'ān is explicit on this point:

> Verily, those who say: Our *Rabb* is Allah, and then keep straight on, *Malā'ikah* shall descend on them (41:30).

Discipline hardens the ego. Rebuffs and disappointments call forth the best in it. Obstacles spur it on to more vigorous efforts. Such strong personalities can never suffer dissolution. Iqbal has expressed the idea in felicitous language:

> Life is like unto a shell and the self is the pearl drop (concretion) therein;
>
> What is the shell worth if it cannot transform the pearl drop into a pearl.
>
> Through self-knowledge, self-control and self-development,
> The self can even conquer death. (*Darb-e-Kalīm*, p. 25).

A weak and undeveloped personality, on the other hand, succumbs to the slightest shock. It is in constant

danger of disintegration. A personality, hardened through self-discipline and sustained by a steadfast purpose, remains identical with itself through the vicissitudes of life and emerges refulgent from the shadows of death.

Some of the Divine attributes, mentioned in the Qur'ān, are such as can belong only to God. No finite being can acquire them. For example, the Qur'ān says of God that "He is the First and the Last" (57: 3). Others, such as knowledge, wisdom, power, etc., can be shared by man, though only to some extent, i.e., within human limits. The description of these is at the same time description of the ideal self:

> Verily We have sent down to you a Book which mentions your own eminence (21 : 10).

Some of these attributes, which are within the reach of man, are fundamental, while others may be said to be of a contingent character. The short chapter of the Qur'ān entitled *Ikhlāṣ* presents them in a compendious form. We should bear in mind that these attributes appertain to God as the Absolute Self, but, by virtue of possessing a self, man too can acquire them within human limits. A close study of the four verses will be found to be highly rewarding. Let us take the first verse: "Say that He, God, is one" (112: 1). The word "One" (*Aḥad*) is exceptionally rich in meaning. It connotes unity, uniqueness and wholeness. It implies self-identity, self-consistency and integrity. Nothing from outside can secure a lodgment in it. Its unity is not paralleled anywhere in the universe. Of course, only a strong personality possesses unity of this kind. A weak personality, with its ever-changing attitudes, cannot lay claim to such oneness. Through development the unity of the self is strengthened. It is in the direction of development that all changes take place, but they do not in any way affect its essential nature. In its essence it knows no change. As the Qur'ān says:

> All that dwells upon the earth is undergoing change, yet still endures the countenance of thy *Rabb*, majestic, splendid (55 : 26-27).

A man of strong character never deviates from the path he has chosen to follow, and a strong character goes with a strong personality. As Berdyaev says: "A strong personality is an expressed character."[14] Such a personality really is what it appears to be, for it is self-consistent. As Professor Whitehead remarks:

> Truth is the conformation of Appearance to Reality.[15]

Because the self enjoys real and not illusory freedom, it is responsible for all that it does, feels or thinks. It has to bear the consequences of its acts and it has to carry its own burden. The Qur'ān is clear on this point:

> For every self is that which it has earned, and against it only that which it has worked (2 : 286).

Again:

> No self will in aught avail another, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor any counterpoise be taken, neither shall they be helped (2 : 48).

This, in brief, is the Law of Requital. If a man achieves success, it is not because luck favoured him, but because he had acted in the right way. If he fails, he cannot put the blame for it on Fate, for failure is the direct result of his own wrong-doing.

Reverting to the Qur'ānic chapter *Ikhlāṣ*, the first verse, as has been shown, emphasises the attributes of *Aḥadīyyah* or Oneness. The second verse refers to the Divine attribute of *Ṣamadīyyah* or self-dependence. The term connotes independence, self-reliance and self-sufficiency. "*Ṣamad*" is the being which depends only on its own self and on nothing else, a being which is eternally enduring and absolutely free. God possesses this attribute in the highest degree, but man, with a self of his own, can also acquire it in some measure. He can exercise free choice and can become independent of external circumstances. "Do what ye *will*," says the Qur'ān (41 : 40). Again: "Whosoever will, let him believe and whosoever will, let him reject" (18 : 29).

In the entire creation, man alone enjoys real freedom.

Freedom is the indispensable condition of moral life. Morality is irrelevant to a being whose actions are completely determined by forces outside itself. Man is capable of taking the initiative. He can freely choose any one of two or more alternative courses of action. He can bend his efforts to the attainment of any goal on which he has set his heart. For these reasons, he responds to the call of duty and engages in moral endeavour. Of course, man does not enjoy God-like freedom: his freedom is subjected to various stresses and limitations. Nevertheless, he is free in the sense that his actions are self-determined, that they flow from his rational nature. This is the true interpretation of the freedom man enjoys. Man is responsible for his actions because they reflect his basic motivational pattern and reveal his essential characteristic. Hence he is the subject of moral judgment. The verse, "There is no compulsion in *dīn*" (2:256), bears witness to the immense importance that the Qur'ān attaches to human freedom. This view of freedom has been admirably expressed by Iqbal:

> Thus the element of guidance and directive control in the ego's activity clearly shows that the ego is a free personal causality. He shares in the life and freedom of the Ultimate Ego who, by permitting the emergence of a finite ego, capable of private initiative, has limited this freedom of His own free will. This freedom of conscious behaviour follows from the view of ego-activity which the Quran takes. There are verses which are unmistakably clear on this point :
>
> 'And say : The truth is from your Lord : Let him, then, who will, believe : and let him who will, be an unbeliever' (18 : 29).
>
> 'If ye do well to your own behoof will ye do well : and if ye do evil against yourselves will ye do it' (17 : 7).[16]

Of course, God alone is absolutely free. But God, exercising His free will, has granted man, the finite self, a measure of freedom. If it implies a restriction on God's power, it is, as is obvious, a self-imposed restriction, and as such does in no way detract from God's omnipotence. As a verse in the Qur'ān puts it, "God has prescribed for Himself *Raḥmah* (i.e. the responsibility of His creature's development and growth)" (6 : 54). It means that *Raḥmah* flows from God's self. It is not imposed on Him by any external agency. God is *Raḥīm* because

Rahmah is an essential Divine attribute. We too feel really free when our actions are in full accord with the basic characteristics of our self. When we impose restrictions on our freedom, it is for the sole purpose of turning it to the best account. These restrictions do not detract from our freedom, nor are they derogatory to our status as free agents. Freedom, properly channelised, is the necessary condition of human development, both individual and social. This freedom is the basic postulate of the Qur'ānic social order, which will be described later on.

The third verse, "He begetteth not nor was He begotten," refers to another important Divine attribute. God, as the Absolute Self, is self-subsistent. The self, *qua* self, does not come into being through the natural process of procreation. Man, of course, is a living organism and, as such, like other animals, is begotten by his parents and, in his turn, begets children. But this is true only as far as his body is concerned. The body, whether human or animal, is a part of the parent body which, having separated itself, develops into a new organism. From the biological point of view, man is on the same level as the animals. His body is subject to natural laws, and the natural processes of growth, decay, procreation and regeneration occur in it. Man's self, however, exists and functions on a higher plane. It is not subject to natural laws and is untouched by natural division. It is an indivisible unity and can suffer no processes. It is not a part of the parents' self, nor can it donate a part of itself to the offspring. It obeys its own inner laws and develops on its own lines. Its activity is creative but not procreative. It creates new qualities and powers which, however, enrich and expand its own nature. Procreation is a bodily function, and creation is the function of the self. The verse we are considering makes it clear that personality is not the product of physical or biological laws which cannot go beyond procreation or reproduction.

The fourth and last verse, "There is none comparable

to Him," refers to another Divine attribute which man, owning a self, can also share. Every self is unique. No self is the exact copy or replica of any other self. In the realm of self, there is no room for duplication. No general laws are applicable to any self, which is a law unto itself. Similarly, a society composed of free individuals is unique. No other kind of society is comparable to it. Man lives by developing and the same is true for human society.

IV. Man

Since the entire edifice of *dīn,* as expounded in the Qur'ān, is firmly based on the view which it takes of human personality, its account of the creation of man deserves careful study. Significant references to the origin of man are dispersed over the pages of the Qur'ān. In the course of evolution, a stage was reached when living creatures began to multiply by means of reproduction. Man too, like the animals, is first conceived in the mother's womb. The Qur'ān puts it in a picturesque way:

> Verily We created man from a production of wet earth, then placed him as a drop (of seed) in a safe lodging; then fashioned We the drop into a clot; then fashioned We the bones; then clothed the bones with flesh, *and then gave it another creation* (23: 12-14).

The term "another creation" is specially significant. It implies that at this stage man is born anew and emerges as a responsible and fully self-determining individual. Through this new birth man is elevated to a plane above the animal world. He is now endowed with a "self" and faces the world as an autonomous being. This happens when the Creator has "breathed into him His *Rūḥ*" (32: 9). Then the *malā'ikah*—the forces of nature—are commanded to submit to him and prostrate themselves before him. Man's dominion over nature is set forth in the symbolical language of the Qur'ān:

> When Allah said to the *malā'ikah,* Lo! I am about to create a man out of mire. And when I have fashioned him and have

breathed into him My *Rūḥ*, then fall down before him, prostrate (38:71-72).

It is this *Rūḥ* or Divine Energy which confers on man the power to choose and act freely. He has now received the inestimable gift of real freedom. In this connection, a passage from Simpson's *The Meaning of Evolution*, may aptly be quoted:

To say that man is nothing but an animal is to deny, by implication, that he has essential attributes other than those of all animals. . . . It is important to realise that the essence of his unique nature lies precisely in those characteristics that are not shared with any other animal. His place in nature and its supreme significance to man are not defined by his animality but his humanity. Man has certain basic diagnostic features which set him off most sharply from any other animal and which have involved other developments not only increasing this sharp distinction but also making it an absolute difference in kind and not only a relative difference of degree.[17]

What, then, is *Rūḥ*? The answer is that it is neither intellect, nor psyche, nor spirit, nor soul. It is the human self or personality, an entity unique in the world. The point, being important, must be elucidated further.

Let us take intellect first. Intellect is a faculty of the mind, termed *qalb* or *fu'ād* in the Qur'ān. We know it through its manifestations—*fikr* (thought), *shu'ūr* (consciousness), *tadabbur* (deliberation), and *ta'aqqul* (intellection). To some extent, animals too possess it. The animal is conscious but man is self-conscious. Self-awareness distinguishes man from other living beings. Besides, human intelligence is far superior to the animal intelligence in its range and capacity. Intellect is the chief instrument for acquiring knowledge. In the Qur'ān man is, again and again, exhorted to use his intellect to understand himself and the world. Men who fail to make use of their intellect are said to be worse than cattle. Animals have a sure guide in instinct but man can rely only on his intellect.

The term "psyche," originally introduced by Freud, is in vogue at present, especially among the psychologists. It is a comprehensive term which denotes all the

mental drives and functions, both conscious and unconscious. However, the important question whether the psyche is an entity in its own right or is only a label for the totality of mental processes is still unanswered. The psychologists have not made any definite pronouncement on this point.

The term "spirit" has a long history behind it. It played an important role in the scholastic philosophy of the Mediaeval Age. The scholastic philosophers held that there were two independent substances in the world, spirit or soul and matter. This naturally led to the theory of dualism. It was believed that spirit and matter had nothing in common; that, in fact, they were opposed to each other. The body, being material, was regarded as an impediment to the soul's progress. Spirit was the sole concern of religion. The soul could achieve salvation only by subduing and crushing the body. This view inevitably resulted in other-worldliness, asceticism and self-abnegation. All pleasure came to be regarded as evil. Devout men and saints gloried in self-mortification. Men who were interested in this-worldly life were naturally repelled by this extreme view. They tended to react favourably to materialism which would not prevent them from tasting the joys of life and appreciating the beauty of nature. In this way the extreme type of spiritualism was opposed by an equally extreme type of materialism. Modern science, however, has exposed the errors of both spiritualism and materialism. The older materialistic theory is now quite untenable. The older conception of matter, as composed of indivisible and ultimately real atoms, has been totally discarded and the same fate has overtaken the theory of dualism. Modern science has divested matter of the very attributes which formerly were regarded as essential to it, namely, extensity and solidity. We will give a few examples to show how matter is conceived by the thinkers of the modern age. Sir James Jeans defines matter as "bottled-up waves," and Bertrand Russell as "a system of interrelated events." Einstein defines it as "condensed thought" and Ouspensky as "a mere condition." The

dualism of spirit and matter has, therefore, no place either in modern science or in modern philosophy. However, the distinction between the functions of the Church and State is still maintained in the West. The Church is concerned only with spiritual matters and has nothing to do with secular affairs. Its sphere of activity is strictly circumscribed. In this way, the dualism of spirit and matter is a built-in part of the modern States in the countries of Western Europe.

Islam, however, has never lent support to the view that spirit and matter are separate and opposed to each other. As a matter of fact, these terms do not occur in the Qur'ān, which regards man as a unitary being and not as the combination of two radically different elements. The concept of soul, too, as a spiritual entity inhabiting a material body, does not harmonise with the Qur'ānic view that man is one and indivisible. According to the Qur'ān, the process of creation was set going by the Divine fiat (*amr*). What it is, is known only to God. We cannot presume to probe into the transcendental reality. We can only believe that it is one and indivisible, although it discloses itself in an infinity of forms. To conclude, the *Rūḥ* is neither spirit nor soul, neither intellect nor mind. It is the transcendental ground of all these.

The Qur'ān itself guides us to the true understanding of the *Rūḥ* which was breathed into man. After it has secured a lodgment in man and has thereby acquired individuality, the *Rūḥ* appears as the *nafs* (self) of man. The following verses leave no room for doubt on this point:

> And the *nafs* and its perfection. He endowed it with the possibilities both of integration and disruption. He will indeed be successful who develops it. And he will indeed fail who stunteth it (91 : 7-10).

The self is God's inestimable gift to man. When man receives it, it is inchoate but endowed with immense potentialities. He is under the moral obligation to

actualise its latent powers and develop it to the fullest extent. He who shirks this duty fails to qualify for elevation to a higher plane of existence. He recedes from the Real and draws nearer to the unreal. And who assiduously develops the *nafs* (self), draws "closer to God" (i.e., realises and manifests godly attributes) and partakes more and more of reality. The distinctive qualities of the *nafs* are intelligence, foresight, courage, the power to take the initiative and the power to choose and act freely. When these are developed, the *nafs* appears in all its glory. Thus it is obvious that the self which is the essence of man is progressive. To evolve is in its nature. If it is prevented from developing, it becomes stunted and corrupt. Its powers atrophy and it gravitates to a lower level.

It may be pointed out here that the term *nafs* is used in its original Qur'ānic sense. In common parlance it has acquired associations and nuances of meaning which are irrelevant to our purpose. It is necessary to restore its original meaning to the word and use it as equivalent to self. We must bear in mind that the *Rūḥ* is not part of God. It is not in God's nature to have parts. The *Rūḥ* is His directive energy, as Iqbal has put it. It is, to put it in a different way, *from* Him but not *of* Him. The human self is not a part of the Divine Self. We have already explained that every self is unique and indivisible. The human self, by virtue of participating in the Divine Energy, is capable of cultivating the Divine attributes, but only so far as is possible for a finite being.

V. Hereafter

In the foregoing pages we have adduced many reasons for believing that there is something in man, and this something can only be his self, which transcends the laws of nature. If we concede this point, it follows that the self remains untouched by the processes of decay and decomposition which culminate in the dissolution of the body. The self, therefore, survives death as it had survived the many changes, some even drastic, which the

body had undergone in this life. The usual objections to survival after death are based on the fact of physical decomposition. The Qur'ān points out that this is not applicable to the self:

> And they say: What! when we shall have become bones and decayed particles, shall we then certainly be raised up, being a new creation. Say: Be ye stones or iron or some other things which are too hard (to receive life) in your minds (17 : 49-51).

For the Qur'ān, life after death is a fact. As regards the question how and by whom man gets a new life after death, the Qur'ān answers:

> They will say: Who shall bring us back? Say: He who brought you into existence the first time (17 : 51).

The point is that if the second life appears strange, so should be the first. Life is a mystery and, since it once emerged from not-being into being, it may conceivably do so again. If God has the power to create, He certainly has the power to recreate as well. The Qur'ān uses the terms "first make" and "second make" in connection with this life and the life after death. The body enables the self to participate in the spatio-temporal system, but is not essential to it. The body may die, but the self lives.

It will be worth while to make a distinction between immortality and survival after death. Whereas every human being is assured of survival after death, immortality is reserved only for those who have attained a high stage of self-development. It is these who are capable of continuing their ascent to higher planes. As they enter heaven (*jannah*) a new vista of development opens before them. Development continues after death, but only for those who have made a start in this life. If man has seized the opportunities for self-realisation that this life offers, he can climb loftier heights in the hereafter. If not, he finds himself in the state termed *jahannam* (hell) in the Qur'ān, where the next step cannot be taken.

VI. Immortality

As we have seen, men who are admitted into heaven (*jannah*) can continue the process of self-realisation, and what is called immortality is conferred on them.

Therein shall they taste no death except the first death (44 : 56).

They do not die again but this does not mean that they will live eternally. Immortality is not eternity. The Qur'ān says of those who have entered *jannah,* that they "shall dwell therein, so long as the heaven and the earth shall endure except what Allah shall please—a gift unfailing" (11 : 108). Eternity may not mean an infinity of temporal points. It may designate a state outside time, a scale of timelessness. It would be wiser to abstain from speculating about things which lie beyond our experience. All that we can say on this point is that God alone is eternal.

VII. The God of Life

The Qur'ān inspires a fervid faith (conviction) in us that a glorious destiny awaits man and the universe. We believe that the cosmic procession is moving steadily towards a grand goal. Mankind is in the vanguard of this procession. The directive force comes from God. In the case of nature this force acts mostly from outside, while in the case of man, with the emergence of the self, it acts, in the main, from within. It is internalised in man and appears as the urge towards self-realisation. External compulsion is supplanted by the sense of duty. Animals are driven by blind instinct in the right direction. Man has to discover it for himself by using his intelligence and has to follow it freely and voluntarily. He can perceive his goal clearly and can, if he likes, bend his efforts to attain it. It is his duty to act as an intelligent, free and moral being. He must freely choose his goal and he must attain it through his own efforts. The only goal worthy of man, as man, is self-development. It means the full unfolding of the self or the

actualisation of all its potentialities. The aim of moral endeavour is to move nearer to this goal. All actions which lead to self-development are good, and immoral actions are those which hamper and impede the process of self-development. This is the criterion by which we can judge the worth of our actions. It can never fail us. This is the criterion which we derive from the Qur'ānic view of human life. The entire system of morality set forth in the Qur'ān is centred in the human personality. Right and wrong, good and bad are meaningful terms only in relation to the human self. Even political and economic questions can be settled only in the light of their effects on the self. By freedom we mean the individual's freedom to develop his personality, and subjection implies his inability to do so, for a man may be a member of a politically free society, but he is not free if he has no scope for self-development and self-expression.

There is a significant difference, however, between the way the physical body develops and the manner of self-development. The body grows by receiving substances from outside and incorporating them; in short, by *taking*. The self, on the other hand, grows by *giving*, of its own abundance to others. The self grows stronger by sharing its knowledge, wisdom and other possessions with others. It is cramped when it keeps its riches to itself. Thus the most rewarding activity in which it can engage is that of *giving*. Generosity enriches it and niggardliness impoverishes it. We must never lose sight of this truth. The Qur'ān leaves no doubt on this point:

> He who gives his wealth so that his self may develop (92 : 18).

Let us see how this principle can be applied in the economic sphere. Even in the most advanced countries of the West the national wealth is not distributed fairly. This has naturally resulted in creating two social classes —the Haves and the Have-nots. The few rich men earn considerably more than they require, while the majority of the people do not earn enough to satisfy their basic needs. The moral fibre of the former becomes loose by

luxury and that of the latter by extreme poverty. The causes are different but the result is the same, debasement and corruption of the self. In Western countries two remedies have been proposed—Taxation and Charity. Both have proved to be ineffectual. They are mere palliatives and cannot cure the social malaise. While taxation is opposed and evaded, charity degrades the individual who receives it and undermines his self-respect. In Eastern Europe it is believed that communism can cure the evil. Against this view it may be urged that in a totalitarian society there is little incentive for the individual to put forth the best in him. Initiative and the spirit of enterprise are at a discount in such a society. Besides this, in a collectivised regimented society the individual's freedom is curbed and hedged round to such an extent that he ceases to be a free autonomous being. Above all, if the concept of life is materialistic, be it in a capitalistic society or communistic, there is no incentive for giving the product of one's own hard labour for the benefit of others.

For Islam the locus of value is the individual self and not society. Self-development of individual man is of supreme importance. Everything else must be subordinated to this end. The Qur'ān aims at the production of free and good men, and such men spontaneously, and of their own accord, will share their possessions with their fellow beings. A society composed of such men will be free from the evils of luxury in one class and poverty in the other. A powerful incentive to generosity and selfless service of others is provided by the belief in the Hereafter. The man who believes in the Hereafter will naturally attach far greater importance to the values that he can carry over to a higher plane than to the material goods which he will have to leave behind when he dies. Goethe has expressed the idea beautifully thus:

> That man is dead even in this life who has no belief in another.[18]

The process of the development of human personality, the Qur'ānic economic order and the life hereafter will all be discussed further in subsequent chapters.

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Chapter IV

DIVINE GUIDANCE

I. Evidence of Guidance

THE world in which we live is not static, a finished product: in fact the world and everything in it are all constantly changing, every moment becoming somewhat different. The early Greek thinkers were profoundly impressed by the phenomenon of change. They addressed themselves to the task of solving the problem posed by the contradictory appearance of change and permanence which the universe presents. Parmenides rejected change as an illusion, while Heraclitus regarded it as the only reality. For several centuries, philosophers tended to ignore the fact of change. With the rise of modern science, specially with the growth of our knowledge of geology and biology, a dynamic conception of the universe came to be generally accepted. The theory of evolution has transformed our intellectual outlook, and now we try to understand everything in the light of its past history. We know that the earth has a long history. It is the product of changes which have occurred through countless aeons; and life has evolved slowly through millions of years. At this point an important question arrests our attention. Are the changes, which have undoubtedly occurred in the world, quite erratic and fortuitous or is there a rhythm in them or a plan underlying them? In the present state of our knowledge there is no clear answer to this question. Some eminent thinkers believe that the changes are aimless and that the universe, although changing, is not moving in a definite direction, far less towards a definite goal. They

declare that they can only see change succeeding change as one wave succeeds another. Fisher, surveying the vast panorama of European history, confesses that he can discern no harmonies therein. He admits that there is progress but affirms emphatically that "there is no law of progress."[1] However, other great thinkers, such as Lloyds Morgan and H. Bergson, claim that the changes, when viewed closely and comprehensively, do reveal a pattern and are seen to be leading towards a goal.

The goal towards which the world and every individual thing existing in it, is moving appears to be perfection. Perfection means self-realisation, that is the actualisation of all the potentialities inherent in a particular being. Defined in this way, it is clear that perfection is not to be taken in an absolute sense, but as relative to the capacity of each individual thing or person. There is thus a direct ratio between the degree of capacity and the degree of attainable perfection. Development is the process through which a thing realises itself and gains the perfection of which it is capable.

In almost every religion, theologians have long been puzzled over the nature of creation. They conceived of it in different ways. The concept of creation through evolution appears to be in full accord with the facts which science has brought to light. It also fits into the view which has been set forth in the Qur'ān. The universe is not the scene of haphazard changes. They are evolutionary changes which lead to the emergence of new and higher qualities and new higher types of being. Every natural thing, as it comes into being, enters on a career of development. Every created being has a definite place in the over-all pattern of creation and in that sense is good. But it is not intended to remain the same throughout its span of life. It is endowed with a number of potentialities and instinctively tends to realize them, becoming more perfect in the process. It is through Divine Guidance, termed *Rubūbiyyah* in the Qur'ān, that things develop and finally attain the form

of which they are capable. This view is expressed simply and tersely in the following verse:

> Who created and perfected, Who measured and directed (87 : 2-3).

This verse draws attention to four typical Divine activities in relation to the universe—*khalq* (creating), *taswīya* (perfecting), *taqdīr* (measuring) and *hudā* (guiding). A natural thing is endowed with certain potentialities and, guided by its *Rabb*, passes from stage to stage until it has reached full development. The guidance and fostering care of God are essential for its development. Divine guidance is at work everywhere in the universe. The form in which it is imparted to its recipient is termed *Waḥi* in the Qur'ān. *Waḥi* is usually translated as Revelation, but *Waḥi* is more generalised and has a wider scope than the English term. It will repay us to look more closely at the nature and function of *Waḥi*.

II. Waḥi and the World of Creation

Waḥi literally means prompting, inspiring or infusing a thought or feeling into a person. At different levels of creation *waḥi* operates in different forms, ranging from inciting a blind urge to inspiring a thought. All things from material bodies to rational beings are amenable to *waḥi*. The earth and the heavenly spheres are represented as submitting to Divine direction. Says the Qur'ān:

> He inspired in each heaven its mandate (41 : 12).

Again, it is said that a day will dawn when "the Earth shall tell out her tidings. For that your *Rabb* will inspire her" (99 : 4-5).

In the animal world, Divine guidance is mediated by *waḥi* in the form of instinctual drive as the following verse indicates:

> Your *Rabb* inspired the bee, saying : Choose your habitation in the hills and in the trees and in that which they thatch (16 : 68).

In the chapter entitled "Light" more is said about the directive force which is at work in everything:

> Have you not seen that those who are in the heavens and the earth serve God, and the birds (also) their wings spread out. Each one knows its appointed task (*ṣalāt*) and the way in which it is to be performed (*Tasbīḥ*) (24 : 41).

Another verse serves to elucidate this point:

> There is no living being on the earth nor a bird that flies with its wings but they are peoples like unto you (possessed of the Divine guidance) (6 : 38).

Everything in fact receives from the Creator all the guidance which it needs. The directive force, which has its source in God, is operative everywhere in the universe. The regularity of the movements of physical objects and the purposive character of the behaviour of living beings, both reveal the guiding hand of God. He guides the stars in their courses. He keeps the planets from straying from their prescribed orbits. Order in the physical world is the direct consequence of Divine control and guidance. The movements of material bodies are governed by unalterable laws. Heavenly bodies submit to these laws no less than minute particles of matter. Thus everywhere we find complete subservience to the law of God. Nothing transgresses the limits set to its activity. This is what "prostration before God" means. Says the Qur'ān:

> And unto Allah makes prostration whatsoever is in the earth of living creatures and the *malāik'ah* (16 : 49).

In the animal world, Divine guidance takes the form of instinct. Instinct enables the animal to make a satisfactory adjustment to its environment. It enables it to satisfy its basic needs and so preserve both itself and its young. Volumes have been written on the marvels of instinct. A few examples will suffice to show how efficiently it guides the animal in a strange world. The duckling and the chick may have been hatched by the same hen but while the former fearlessly plunges into water, the latter shrinks from it and keeps to the

dry land. Each seems to know instinctively what it can do and what it cannot. Migratory birds traverse thousands of miles, flying over deserts and forests, plains and mountains, and fishes through seas and oceans, and never lose their way. Instinct guides them unerringly to the clime they are seeking. The wasp lays its eggs and provides food for its young which it is never going to see. The directive factor operative in the nature of each animal incites it to engage in activities which lead to the satisfaction of its basic needs. The same factor is responsible for the harmony and order which nature exhibits. *Waḥi* is really this factor in operation. Galloway's comment on this point should be noted :

> In the widest sense of the word, the order of nature is a revelation, for it unfolds a meaning which has its ultimate source in God.[2]

We are led to draw two conclusions from this. Firstly, it is Divine Guidance or *Waḥi* which carries each and every thing from stage to stage until it has reached its full development. Secondly, every thing has to follow the course which has been prescribed for it. This may be said to be its nature.

III. Man and Waḥi

No doubt, man too needs Divine Guidance. Without it, he is likely to go astray. However, the guidance which is vouchsafed to him is of a different kind which is suited to his peculiar characteristic. His activities are not governed by invariable laws, as is the case with inanimate beings, nor are they completely determined by the blind urges inherent in him. He has been granted a measure of freedom and this means that he is free to choose the right or wrong path, and that he is free even to commit mistakes. He may choose what is good for him ; but he may also choose that which is harmful to him. He enjoys freedom of choice and has to pay the price for the wrong one. Even the sure guidance that instinct gives is denied to him. The chick, when it finds itself on the brink of a pond, instinctively

shrinks back and saves itself. The human child may misuse its freedom because of internal compulsion and may plunge into the pond and get drowned. Man has much in common with the animals but the differences between the two are more important than the resemblances. His intellectual powers and immense learning capacity set him apart from the other animals. However, though potentially superior to the animals, he is at the beginning of life much worse-equipped for the struggle of life than they are. If he develops his powers he can quickly outstrip the animals; but if he fails to develop them, he may as easily sink below the animal level.

Again, man is a moral being, capable of distinguishing between right and wrong, and free to choose either. However, he finds that it is not easy to distinguish good from evil, nor is it easy to choose the good, when it is known. In his own self there is no sure guide to the good. No moral instinct leads him unerringly to the right path. It is obvious that there are no universally accepted moral codes, for there are as many codes as cultural groups in the world. Each tribe seems to have developed a code of its own, which is unacceptable to other groups. A dispassionate survey of the several moral codes leads us to the standpoint of ethical relativism. A code of conduct cannot be judged to be good or bad in the abstract. It may be good for one cultural level and bad for another. In the past, conscience was credited with the power to discriminate between right and wrong. Now, psychologists, as well as sociologists, maintain that a man's conscience is shaped by the cultural environment in which he has been brought up. Conscience is only the group code which has been internalised in the individual. We are thus driven to conclude that there is no sure guide to the right and good inherent in man. As the Qur'ān says: "He prays for *sharr* as he prays for *khair* (17:11).

The view that the power to discriminate between right and wrong is inherent in man finds no support in

the Qur'ān. The verse (91 : 8)[3] which is very often quoted in this connection has been misunderstood. It does not refer to any such discriminating quality of "human nature." For if man possessed the capability of judging good from the bad, and thus distinguishing between the right and wrong without the help of Divine guidance, the institution of *nubuwwah* would lose its significance. Why then should God have raised *Anbiya* from among men and entrusted to them the task of directing His people on the right path? Again, if the power to distinguish between right and wrong were inherent in the nature of man, the whole of mankind, from its beginning to this day, would have been following one and the same moral code; but, as already stated, there are no universally accepted moral standards. Each group has its own ethical code, and what is more, this code has also changed with the passage of time. The verse cited above does not, therefore, mean that "human nature"—or man's conscience—is qualified to know, of its own, right from wrong, or has within it the power to discriminate between *khair* and *sharr*. The words in the verse referred to above, (i.e., 91 : 8) on the contrary are the statement of a fact, the fact of man's potentialities for becoming good or bad, as he decides for himself. Since the human personality (or self) is given in an undeveloped form, there are, the verse says, equal possibilities of his attaining the highest good, or wasting himself in wrong doing. The correct translation of the verse is: "Human self has been endowed with the capability of both integrating itself or corrupting it."

Again, those who believe that conscience is an absolutely trustworthy guide for man appeal to verse (30 : 30) which is usually translated as:

> The nature of Allah (*fiṭratullah*) in which He has made man.

It should, however, be noted that the Arabic word "*fiṭrat*" occurring in the verse does not mean the same thing as the English word "nature". The word "nature" means the constitution or the essential properties of a

thing which are unchangeable. On the other hand, *fiṭrat* merely means creation or bringing something into existence. We cannot, therefore, construe the verse as meaning that man has the same nature as God. It is just to remind us that man has been created according to the same Divine law of creation as other things in the universe. If we were to concede that man has been created in "God's nature," how are we to reconcile this with some of his "qualities" as given in the Qur'ān. For example, man is said to be "created weak" (4:28), "created of haste," "being hasty" (17:11), "ungrateful" (17 : 67), "covetous" (17 : 100), "impatient" (70 : 19), "a caviller" (18:54), "a tyrant and ignorant" (33:72). The truth is that there is no such thing as "man's nature" in the sense in which the word is usually used. For, by nature we understand the properties which constitute the very being of a thing and hence characterise its existence in a way peculiar to itself. It is its nature which determines its behaviour. There can be no question, therefore, of its going against its nature. It is like a rigid law which no object can violate. Under given circumstances, water must flow, fire must burn and the animal must follow the course prescribed by its nature. Man, however, stands on a different level. Inasmuch as he is a part of the physical world, it may be said that it is his "nature" to behave in accordance with its laws in the interest of his physical self, although, as already stated, he often goes against those laws as well. As for his real self, he is free to choose any of the possibilities open to him. This is why the rigidity of behaviour in the lower animals is in sharp contrast to the changeability and variability of human behaviour. "Human nature" is eminently malleable, and assumes so many different forms that no adequate definition of it has yet been formulated. There are numerous theories of "human nature" but none of them commands universal acceptance. From Plato and Aristotle to Freud and Gardiner there has been a wide range of theories about man; but man somehow escapes from every theoretical framework.

According to the view set forth in the Qur'ān, man is born neither good nor bad, but with the power and freedom to become either. He is endowed with immense potentialities. If he develops them and employs them for the moral and material advancement of mankind, his conduct is good; if he fails to utilise his immense resources or puts them to uses which are harmful to mankind, his conduct is bad. *Waḥi* or Divine Guidance points out the way to self-realisation and to the promotion of human knowledge and happiness. By following the path which is pointed out by *Waḥi*, man can finally achieve the status of a "*mo'min*". A "*mo'min*" is at peace with himself and with the world because he has successfully resolved his inner and outer conflicts. *Waḥi* shows the way to harmony in the individual mind as well as in human society. The verses cited above to the effect that man is bad, simply mean that if he ignores Divine Guidance and follows his baser desires he is liable to become worse and worse.

Let us repeat that the Qur'ān definitely rejects the view that human nature has a fixed pattern and a rigidly determined behaviour, for this view deprives man of real freedom.

IV. Nubuwwah

As stated above, all things in the world, from inanimate bodies to man, depend on Divine Guidance for self-development and the fulfilment of the purpose of their existence. This guidance, however, takes many forms, each form being appropriate to a particular level of existence. The form it assumes at the human level, deserves special consideration.

Man is a rational being and possesses a free and autonomous self. He values his freedom, knows that he alone is responsible for his actions and has no right to complain if their consequences are unpleasant. He chafes under compulsion, either internal or external. He too needs Divine Guidance but he can receive it only in a form which does not put a curb on his freedom and does not detract

from his right to judge for himself. Guidance is offered to man through *Wahi* or Revelation. Every man, however, cannot be the recipient of *Wahi*. Only an exceptionally gifted person, who is considered by God capable of self-possession in the face of such a vital experience, can receive guidance directly from God. The appellation "*Nabi*" is applied to such a person and *Nubuwwah* signifies two characteristic functions of the *Nabi*. As he is attuned to God, he receives Divine Revelation or *Wahi* and as he is in close touch with his fellow-beings, he communicates the *Wahi* to them in exactly the same form in which he has received it. The purity of the medium ensures the purity of the revelation which it transmits. Moreover, through his exemplary life and conduct the *Nabi* presents the revelation in a vivid and concrete form which cannot fail to impress the people.

To understand the nature of *nubuwwah* we must first get rid of a misconception. In the Jewish-Christian tradition, the "prophet" is a man who prophesies or foretells future events. Endowed with unusual psychic powers, the "prophet" is considered to be capable of foreseeing future happenings of which he warns the people. The Islamic conception of *Nabi* is quite different. As a matter of fact the term "prophethood" as understood in English is not equivalent to the term "*nubuwwah*" which the Qur'ān uses in this context. The *Nabi* is not a "prophet" or a soothsayer. His function is not divination but the communication of the revelation which has been vouchsafed to him. "Prophecy" as understood by the Jews is completely irrelevant to the mission of the *Nabi*. He fulfils his mission if he communicates the *Wahi* as he has received it, without adding to or taking away anything from it. His purpose is not to prognosticate but to offer moral guidance to man in the light of Divine Revelation. This is clear from another term which is applied to a *Nabi*. He is "*Rasūl*" or messenger. He bears a message from God telling man how he can lead a good life and how he can achieve perfection. The Qur'ān is explicit on this point :

O Children of Adam ! Whenever messengers come to you from among you, who narrate to you My Revelation, then whosoever follows it and amends, there shall come no fear upon them nor shall they grieve (7 : 35).

It should be noted that the purpose of *Waḥi* is not to compel man to choose any particular way. *Waḥi* merely informs him which way leads to his growth and development and which to his disintegration, and leaves him free to choose for himself. *Waḥi* imparts the requisite knowledge to man who is then free to act upon it or not. Says the Qur'ān :

Say : it is the truth from Allah. Then whosoever will let him believe, and whosoever will let him reject (18 : 29).

Let us clearly grasp the Qur'ānic conception of *Waḥi*. *Waḥi* is a gift of God, which He bestows on the man whom He selects. *Waḥi* is not a prize which a man can win for himself through his own efforts. By developing his latent powers, man cannot qualify himself for *nubuwwah*. The *Nabi* does not discover truth ; it is disclosed to him by God. The Qur'ān, therefore, defines revelation as "sending down" or "*nuzūl*" :

Verily we have sent down to thee the Book with truth (39 : 2).

The point to bear in mind is that the reception of *Waḥi* is an intense and vital experience, but it is not an experience which has been induced by subjective factors. The *Nabi* does not objectify his personal experience. He is intensely and vividly aware of his encounter with the Divine. He feels himself the passive recipient of a message, which must remain uncontaminated by his personal desires and feelings :

He, the *Nabi* does not speak of (his own) desire (53 : 3).

This is as far as we can go in understanding the nature of *Waḥi*. It is not, therefore, strange that in his ordinary life, the *Nabi* talks and behaves very much like other men. Only during the experience of *Waḥi*, does he speak with absolute authority and discloses the truth which human intellect cannot discover by itself. The

words he utters in this state are not his but God's. Those who knew the *Nabi* Muḥammad (P) intimately have recorded the fact that, although in secular matters he was always willing to make concessions to those who differed from him, (of course, within the restrictions imposed by *Waḥi*) if by doing so he could settle a dispute amicably, he was adamant in refusing to make the slightest change in the *Waḥi* which had been delivered to him. In day to day affairs, the basis of his decision-making process was mutual consultation with its give and take, but he would countenance no departure from his *Waḥi*. Throughout his life he was never tempted to change even a single word of the revelation for reasons of expediency. The Qur'ān bears witness to the fact :

> Say (O Muḥammad) : It is not for me to change it of my own accord. I only follow that which is revealed to me (10 : 15).

The *Nabi* has not the slightest inkling of the revelation before he has actually received it. Nor does he strive for it. It is to him literally a revelation, the impact of something new, unexpected and unsuspected ; something not deriving either from his past experience or from his present mental state. Says the Qur'ān :

> And thus We have revealed to thee a revelation by Our Command; thou didst not know what the Book was nor the faith ; but We have made it a light by which We guide whom We please of Our servants (42 : 52 ; 28 : 86).

Even the office of *nubuwwah*, when it comes, takes him by surprise. He had not expected to be chosen to act as the vehicle of *Waḥi*. God selects a man for the role of the *Nabi* but keeps it from his knowledge till he has actually been assigned the role. The man is selected because he possesses exceptional qualities which fit him for the role of *nubuwwah*. However, years of probation, years during which his character and conduct are discriminately tested, intervene between the selection and the actual summons to *nubuwwah*. He has no notion of this process. He is entrusted with the mission only when he is proved worthy. In the case of Moses, the long period of preparation which preceded the call to *nubuwwah*, has been

well described in the Qur'ān :

> And We have (O Moses) already been gracious to you another time. When We sent word to your mother, saying : Put him into the ark and cast him into the sea, and the sea shall cast him on the shore, and an enemy of Mine and his shall take him (and bring him up) ; and I bestowed on you love from Me, that you may be brought up under My eye.
>
> When your sister walked up and said : Shall I show you one who will take care (of the child), then We returned you to your mother, that her eye might be cheered, and that she might not grieve. And you did kill a man, and We saved you from the trouble, and We offered other opportunities so that you may test your capabilities. Then, for years did you stay among the people of Median. It was after all this that you came up to Our measure, O Moses ! And I have chosen you for Myself (20 : 37—41).

To understand the real nature of *Waḥi*, it is essential to distinguish it clearly from mystical experience with which it is often confused. Some scholars have tended to regard the revelation of a *Nabi* as the culmination of the mystical experience. This is a misconception. The difference between the two types of experience is fundamental. It is a difference of kind and not merely of degree. Mystical experience, whatever it is, is within the reach of every man, provided he is willing to subject himself to a rigorous discipline. It is the outgrowth of the mystical sense, or oceanic sense as Koestler calls it, which is inherent in man. Like the aesthetic sense it can be cultivated and developed. The mystical experience may be induced through self-mortification, contemplation, detachment and meditation. It is a purely subjective experience in which the affective factor is predominant. Bound being the self of the mystic, it has no bearing on, or testimony in, the outer world. The mystic finds it supremely gratifying and absolutely convincing. Therein he tastes a bliss which overwhelms and dissolves his finite personality. He feels himself merged in the infinite ocean of reality. The mystic claims that his experience is charged with value of a high order, but it remains private and incommunicable. The mystic may have had a vision of something of which he is satisfied to be the truth, but he cannot make his fellow-beings share his

vision. He cannot impart his *knowledge* thus gained to others. The mystic may have a feeling of contact with what he considers to be the Real, but his experience, of whatever order, remains personal and subjective. The experience of revelation is different. It is the experience of dawning of Reality as it *is* on the individual mind. The *Nabi* feels himself not merely in contact with the Divine but in communication with it. And no doubts assail him. He is quite sure that he is receiving knowledge which he must impart to all men. *Waḥi* or revelation is meant to be communicated. The purpose of *Waḥi* is not to gratify the urges or aspirations of a single individual, the *Nabi*, or to guide only him, but to place guidance, through him, at the disposal of all who wish to profit by it. The message conveyed through *Waḥi* is to be broadcast all over the world as its content is of objective value. This radical difference puts *Waḥi* exclusively in a class by itself and sets it far apart from all types of mystical experience. Mystical experience may enrich the mind of the mystic; revelation, on the other hand, acts as a powerful leaven in the life of the people. It is a living and dynamic force which turns the stream of history into a new channel. The rise of Islam offers a striking example of the power of revelation.

There is another significant difference between *Waḥi* and mystical experience. The mystic feels his personality melting and dissolving as a grain of salt in water. The finite self is supposed to have merged in the Infinite. The liberation from the narrow confines of personality gives the mystic a sense of exhilaration and exaltation. He soars high above the world of fact into a region where there is neither "must" nor "ought". If he returns to the world of fact, he is afflicted with nostalgia and groans under the burden of life. Revelation, on the contrary, both enriches and invigorates the human self. Thriving on the nourishment provided by *Waḥi*, it deals effectively with the problems of actual life and strives to establish the "Kingdom of Heaven" on earth. The *Nabi's* revelation infuses a new life into the people, so that with

renewed faith and revitalised energy they march forward to battle with the forces of destruction and disintegration. In short, while the mystic aims at self-effacement, the *Nabi*, armed with his revelation, summons the people to march towards the goal of self-realisation, and self-development and self-assertion. Iqbal, in his masterly discussion of the subject, has clearly brought out the distinction between the experience of a *Nabi* and that of a mystic. The relevant passage deserves to be quoted in full:

"Muḥammad of Arabia ascended the highest Heaven and returned. I swear by God that if I had reached that point, I should never have returned." These are the words of a great Muslim saint, Abdul Quddus of Gangoh. In the whole range of sufi literature, it will be, probably, difficult to find words which, in a single sentence, disclose such an acute perception of the psychological difference between the prophetic and the mystic types of consciousness. The mystic does not wish to return from the repose of 'unitary experience'; and when he does return, as he must, his return does not mean much for mankind at large. The prophet's return is creative. He returns to insert himself into the sweep of time with a view to control the forces of history, and thereby to create a fresh world of ideals. For the mystic, the repose of 'unitary experience' is something final; for the prophet it is awakening, within him, of world-shaking psychological forces, calculated to completely transform the human world. The desire to see his religious experience transformed into a living world-force, is supreme in the prophet. Thus his return amounts to a kind of pragmatic test of the value of his religious experience. In its creative act the prophet's will judges both itself and the world of concrete fact in which it endeavours to objectify itself. In penetrating the impervious material before him, the prophet discovers himself for himself, and unveils himself to the eye of history. Another way of judging the value of the prophet's religious experience, therefore, would be to examine the type of manhood that he has created, and the cultural world that has sprung out of the spirit of his message.[4]

The *Nabi's* mission of leading all mankind, in accordance with the dictates of *Waḥi* and thus bringing about a universal revolution to mould the course of history, is no light task. It is with reference to this heavy burden of responsibility that the Qur'ān observes:

Have We not caused your bosom to broaden and eased you of the burden which weighed down your back? (94 : 1-3).

The *Nabi* proclaims the message he has received and it is through the sheer force of truth that it sinks in the mind of those whose finer susceptibilities have not been deadened. The *Nabi*, by the example of his own life and conduct, fires them with the ambition to live a purer, nobler and higher life. These men gather round the *Nabi* and earnestly strive to shape their lives in the light of the revelation. Inspired by the radiant and fervent faith (conviction) which the *Nabi* has kindled in them, they endeavour to make the world a home for the higher values. They set about building up a society which gives man full opportunity for self-expression and self-development, a society worthy of free men who are conscious of their dignity as human beings. They thus become participants in carrying out the Divine plan for the universe.

Mystic experience—whatever it may be—is nothing beyond the development of some of the inner faculties of man, *e.g.*, will power, which every human being can develop irrespective of his creed, belief or even actions. This is why mystics are found in every religion, cult or group. The claim of a mystic that he is in tune with the Infinite or has seen Reality as it is, is only the projection of his own imagination. This is why the description of Reality given by various mystics differs from one another. At any rate, mysticism has nothing to do with *dīn* and the Qur'ān does not lend support to it. Even the word "*tasawwuf*" (mysticism) does not find a place in the earlier literature of Islam—Qur'ān or Hadith. "It is," as stated by Iqbal, "an alien plant in the soil of Islam." In Islam there is nothing mystic or mysterious. It is a simple and plain code of life which aims at establishing a social order in which permanent values manifest themselves in concrete shape.

V. Conclusion

The conclusions to which the above discussion has led us may now be briefly stated :

1. Everything, animate or inanimate, is endowed with the capacity for development. Its development is guided, at every step, by the Supreme Being.
2. It must not be supposed that the guiding power acts upon things from outside. It is inherent in their nature and acts from within them. It would be more correct to say that it is the nature of a thing to seek the development of its latent capacity and thus to reach its destiny.
3. Man, by virtue of possessing an autonomous self, occupies a privileged position in the universe. Divine guidance is offered to him in the form which is suited to a free rational being. It does in no way curtail man's freedom of choice and action. Man has the right to reject it, if he so desires and is willing to pay the price of rejection.
4. For man, *Waḥi* or revelation, is the vehicle of Divine Guidance. God selects a man who is fit to be the custodian of truth. This man is the *Nabi* who receives the revelation from God, keeps it inviolate and faithfully communicates it to his fellow-beings. Those who accept it, of their own accord, find themselves following the path which leads to the enhancement of their powers and towards the goal of perfection. Those who reject it, have perforce to follow the downward path of deterioration and degradation. Self-fulfilment is the reward of the former, while an enfeebled and perverted self falls to the lot of the latter. Such is the Law of Requital.
5. The *Waḥi*—the Divinely revealed guidance—is really God's Word. It is not contaminated by the personal likes and dislikes, feelings and desires of the recipient. The medium specially selected by God is so refined that the *Waḥi*, in passing through it, suffers no diminution in its purity or lustre. The *Waḥi* transcends human intellect but

does not conflict with reason. It rather supplements it.

We hope that a few words about the institution of *nubuwwah* will serve to elucidate this point. At an early stage in the history of civilization, man set up a sort of social organisation and began to function as a free self-conscious member of a group. But he often misused the freedom which had been granted him and yielded to the temptations by which he was beset. The pursuit of selfish ends brought the members of the group into conflict with each other. These conflicts posed a serious threat to the society which was far from stable. Man, more often than not, chooses wrong in preference to right. The catastrophe which was imminent, could have been averted by depriving man of his freedom and making human society as regimented as a beehive or a colony of termites. The aim of Providence, however, was to enhance his freedom and to enlarge its scope, not to extinguish it altogether. The only way in which freedom could be preserved and at the same time the danger of its misuse could be minimised, was to make the requisite guidance accessible to man. *Nubuwwah* fulfilled both conditions. From time to time, God selected a man who could be entrusted with Divine Revelation. Every nation had its own *Nabi* who, relying not on force and compulsion but on persuasion, summoned his people to the path of righteousness. The guidance was meant for free beings who could accept or reject it as they liked. There are no people amongst whom a *Nabi* has not been raised by God. There have been many *Anbiya*, but substantially the same revelation was vouchsafed to them. This is made clear in the Qur'ān:

Verily, We have revealed to thee, like as We revealed to Noah and the Anbiya after him, and (as) We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael, and Isaac and Jacob and (others from amongst their) tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon; and We gave David the Psalms; and apostles of whom We have related to thee before, and apostles of whom We have not related to thee, and God spoke to Moses (as well) speaking with him (4 : 163-64).

Many *Anbiya* are mentioned by name in the Qur'ān

and the strenuous efforts made by each of them to expound the revelation and lead his people in its light are described. Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Aaron, David, Solomon and Jesus and some others are among those who have been expressly mentioned. The Qur'ān explicitly states that there have been many *Anbiya* who are not mentioned but they deserve to be respected as they too were the bearers of the Divine Revelation. The purpose of the Qur'ān is to emphasize the essential unity of the Divine Revelation which was vouchsafed to different men in different ages and countries. Moreover, the Qur'ān forbids Muslims to make invidious distinctions between the *Anbiya*:

> The believers say: We make no distinction between any of His messengers (2 : 285).

The institution of *nubuwwah* has rendered invaluable service to mankind. As long as the human mind was immature, men needed a personal guide who could explain to them the Divine purpose and who could, by his living example, show to them how they could bring their life into full accord with that purpose. The *Anbiya* helped forward the progress of moral and intellectual development. For this reason, *Nabi* after *Nabi* came to mankind in quick succession. There came a time, however, when the mind of man reached maturity and his intellectual powers were ready to tackle the problems of life. *Nubuwwah* aimed at this result and when it was accomplished there was no reason for the continuance of this institution. The glorious line of *Anbiya* came to its natural end with Muḥammad (P), the bearer of the last revelation. *Nubuwwah* had served its purpose and was no longer necessary. Modern man, with his mature mind, does not need a personal guide: he needs general guidance in the form of ideas and principles which are valid for all time. These ideas and principles have been preserved for all time in the Qur'ān, which enshrines the final revelation:

> We have revealed the Book and We verily are its Guardian (15 : 9).

Besides this, we have in the life and character of Muḥammad (P) a perfect example of the ideal human life. The sublime ideas together with the life of Muḥammad (P), in which they found concrete expression, are sufficient for the needs of all genuine seekers after truth. We have no justification for expecting a new revelation and no mystic or saint can arrogate *nubuwwah* to himself. There is no room for compromise on this point. The claim of a mystic, or any other person, that he receives communication from God, cuts at the very root of the belief in the finality of *nubuwwah*.

The purpose of *nubuwwah* was to serve and safe-guard man's freedom when it was threatened both from within by his unruly selfish passions and from without by the arbitrary power of rulers and priests. The purpose of the abolition of *nubuwwah* is to widen the scope of human freedom and to allow man to judge and decide on all questions affecting his life. He should no longer be a slave to custom and tradition. He should now exercise his own power of judgment, work out his way and shape his destiny in the light of his knowledge and with the help of the Divine Guidance enshrined in the Qur'ān. Man has now come into his own, as a free and responsible being. He can shape his life as he likes, according to the dictates of his reason guided by Divine Revelation preserved in the Holy Qur'ān.

VI. Belief in God without Belief in Revelation

It will be appropriate at this point to say something in defence of the belief in Divine Revelation. Some great thinkers in the West, while conceding the existence of God, have rejected the view that certain men, chosen by God, were made the recipients of His Revelation. They believe that human reason is capable of giving all the guidance that man needs in this life. Man, they affirm, can solve all the problems in the world, with the help of his reason. He does not need the direct guidance of God. Humanism, Religion without Revelation—which, by the

way, is the title of a well-known book by Julian Huxley —is their creed. There is nothing new about this creed. The Qur'ān tells us that it was prevalent during the time of Muḥammad (P). Concerning those who held this view the Qur'ān says:

> Ask them: Whose is the earth and whoever therein is, ye know? They will say, of God. Say thou; Will ye not then mind? Ask them: who is the *Rabb* of the several heavenly bodies and the *Rabb* of the glorious Throne (of power over the entire universe)? They will say: they are of God. Say thou: will ye then not take care of (not doing anything against His laws)?
>
> Ask them: Who is it in whose hand is the kingdom of all things and who protects (all) but is not protected (by any), if ye but know? They will say: in God's. Say thou: how then are ye deluded? Nay, We have brought them the truth (in this Book) and they are liars (when they say that they do believe in God but not in His Book) (23: 84—90).

Belief in Divine Revelation is the necessary corollary of belief in God. To deny Revelation is to strike at the root of *dīn*. To permit human reason to usurp the office of *Waḥi* is to let man usurp the place of God. As a matter of fact, it is absurd to believe in God while denying His guidance. Suppose A believes that the universe was created by God, and B affirms that it was the product of natural causes. As these beliefs have no practical consequences, it is immaterial which one is chosen and which one is rejected. But suppose A believes that he ought to behave in such a way so as not to transgress the limits prescribed by Divine Revelation and B believes that he is free to act in any way he likes. In this case, it is obvious that the difference between them is of vital importance to others. A is trustworthy and reliable, while no one will take the risk of trusting B. Without belief in Revelation, belief in God is a matter of academic interest. As the following quotation shows, Ouspensky holds the same view:

> If there is no idea of Revelation, there is no religion. And in religion there is always something unknowable by the ordinary mind and ordinary thinking. For this reason, no attempts to create an artificial synthetic religion by intellectual methods have ever led, or can ever lead anywhere.[5]

Belief in God and belief in His Revelation, are therefore, fundamental to *dīn*. Rejection of Revelation impoverishes *dīn*, so that it ceases to be a living force in human life. The Muslims believe that the Qur'ān enshrines the final Revelation. They believe that the Qur'ān is the only revealed book which has never been tampered with. It has suffered no excisions or interpolations and the word of God is preserved in it as delivered to Muḥammad (P). And this belief of theirs is supported by historical evidence.

References

1. H.A.S. Fisher, *History of Europe*, Preface, p. 1.
2. Galloway, *The Philosophy of Religion*, p. 582.
3. The verse is wrongly translated as:

God inspired human self (with conscience of) what is wrong for it and what is right for it.

4. Iqbal, *op. cit.*, p. 118.
5. P.D. Ouspensky, *A New Model of the Universe*, p. 34.

Chapter V

REASON AND ĪMAN

I. Reason and Its Limitations

THE source of Revelation (*Waḥī*) is transcendental Reality, which is beyond the ken of reason, but as Revelation is meant for human beings and serves the purpose of guiding them, it is, naturally, couched in a language which is intelligible to them. Reason, therefore, can apprehend the content of Revelation.

Reason has its own distinctive approach to Reality and apprehends it, albeit to a limited extent. The greatest achievement of reason is science. Science employs methods which are perfectly valid and yields true knowledge within its proper sphere. Reason certainly has its limitations but sceptics declare it to be absolutely unreliable. This is not true. The telescope enables us to see heavenly bodies which we cannot see with the naked eye. It would be unreasonable to reject its aid on the ground that it does not extend our vision to the outermost regions of the universe. Similarly, it is no doubt true that reason cannot give us absolute knowledge, nevertheless the knowledge it does achieve, however small, is useful and valuable. The old adage, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing" is only partially true, as traditional maxims are. A little knowledge is only dangerous when we take it to be complete knowledge. Every fragment of knowledge is useful if we apply it with intelligence and with full awareness that it reveals only a fraction of reality. But if it is wrong to despise and reject human reason as an unreliable

guide, or belittle its value, it is equally wrong to exaggerate it and claim that the whole of reality is within its ken. Only a few aspects of reality are accessible to reason and about them it does supply true and useful knowledge. Reality, however, has an infinity of aspects, and all of them, as well as the very core of reality, reason will always find inaccessible. Reason can legitimately function within its own sphere and ceases to be reliable the moment it steps beyond it. Wisdom requires that we should form a correct estimate of the capacity of human reason as well as of its limitations. We can put it to the best use only when we know what it can do and what it cannot. Some scholars, dazzled by the spectacular and soaring success of modern science, believe that the time is not far off when science will have solved the riddle of the universe and will be able to answer any question that we care to ask regarding man and the world. The universe to them is a gigantic machine, which, though immensely complex, can yet be understood fully and exploited by human reason. This presumptuous attitude is hardly justified and, if not corrected soon, can do us great harm. Wise men, including great scientists, are aware that reason can never fathom reality. What Shakespeare wrote in the seventeenth century is still true when science has seemingly reached its meridian :

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

The same sentiment is echoed even by some scientists of today. Dr. Aitken, the Director of Lick Observatory, California, while discussing the formation of the universe frankly admitted : "Of the origin of the universe and its ultimate fate, we know practically nothing."[1] Besides, there is no finality about scientific theories. With the discovery of a new fact, even a well established theory may have to be modified or even set aside. We cannot, therefore, place absolute reliance on them nor can a philosophy of conduct valid for all human beings, be built upon the shifting sands of scientific theory. Dr. Crowther

aptly remarks: "The last word of science on any topic may perhaps be left for the last man to utter."[2] It will be sheer folly then, if we were to depend on reason alone for acquiring a set of right principles of conduct. Reason has repeatedly failed to give right guidance in regulating social relations. Experimenting with social affairs has often led to disaster. Kingship was tried at first, then imperialism and finally democracy, and that too is on trial today. Man has paid a heavy price for experimenting with various forms of government—centuries of bloodshed, internecine wars, revolutions, class struggle, and economic and political unrest. Man is still yearning for justice, equality, freedom and peace. For two centuries men have pinned their faith on democracy but there are now unmistakable signs of disillusionment. Later on we will undertake a fuller discussion of democracy.

II. The Function of Reason

Man is a finite being and the powers with which he is endowed are necessarily limited in scope. Human reason is no exception. On this ground, however, we are not justified in despising it and refusing to employ it in solving the problems of life. The guidance that reason gives is not the less valuable because it is not perfect. It is reason that has raised man far above the animal level; to repudiate reason is to sink to the animal level or even lower. Man cannot fall back on instinct which is the mainstay of animals. Man outgrew instinct when he developed reason. The glorious successes of reason however, led man to over-estimate its capacity: he expected that reason would give him absolute knowledge. When this expectation was not fulfilled, he became disillusioned with reason and went to the other extreme in rejecting reason outright. Among religious people too, both the mystics and the dogmatists are in revolt against reason. The mystics seek guidance in mystical experience and the dogmatists strictly in the letter of the scriptures. They forget that both these things have to be interpreted by human reason if they are to be of any use to man.

They forget that reason is the distinctive attribute of man and to repudiate it is to repudiate the best in him. They forget that the Qur'ān does not lend support to this deprecation of reason. Rather, it exhorts us to make full use of our rational power.

The Qur'ānic view of reason and its place in human life deserves careful consideration. Briefly stated, this view is that the long evolutionary process culminated in the emergence of man, characterised by the Qur'ān as a "new creation" (23 : 14). It was at this stage that "He breathed in him His *Rūḥ*" (32 : 9), and endowed him with the capacities of "seeing, hearing and apprehending" (32 : 9). Man was granted a mind (*fuād*) which enabled him to think and, through the instrumentality of intellect, to build up a system of knowledge. Man will, indeed, be an ungrateful creature if he refuses to value and make use of the best of Divine gifts. Reason converts the raw grist collected by the senses into knowledge. The Qur'ān rightly assigns to reason an important role in human life :

> The worst of beasts in Allah's sight are the deaf, the dumb, who do not use their intellect to understand (8 : 22).

This is a graphic description of the degradation of man when he does not press reason to his service. Such a man, the Qur'ān tells us, not only lives a worthless and debased life in this world but also renders himself unfit to live in the higher plane on which he enters after death :

> There are many a people, both among the civilized and the nomadic tribes, who lead such a life as makes it obvious that they are meant for hell (7 : 179).

It is so, because, as the Qur'ān puts it:

> They have hearts with which they discern not, and they have eyes with which they see not, and they have ears with which they hear not ; these are as the cattle—nay are worse ; they are the heedless (7 : 179).

The point is again emphasized in the chapter entitled

the *Furqan*. The *Rasul* is addressed in the following words :

Do you think that most of them hear or have sense? They are but as the cattle—nay but they are farther astray (25 : 44).

The denizens of Hell are consumed with remorse because they had possessed understanding but did not use it to any purpose :

Had we been wont to listen or have sense, we had not been among the dwellers in flame (67 : 10).

In the chapter entitled *Yāsīn*, they are again reminded of their sinful negligence of their duty to use their understanding :

And yet *Shaiṭān* has led astray of you a great multitude. Had ye then a sense. This is the *Jahannam* with which ye were threatened (if ye did not use your sense and follow him blindly) (36 : 62-63).

It is clear, therefore, that Islam is no enemy of reason and does not regard it as a hinderance to "spiritual" progress. It will be worthwhile to consider the role that the Qur'ān assigns to reason both in the "secular" and the "spiritual" spheres.

III. Reason and Faith (Īmān)—The Qur'ānic View

In the Qur'ān, human reason is repeatedly extolled. As already stated, the birth of reason in man is referred to as marking a "new creation." It is clearly stated that even Divine Revelation is not to be accepted unquestioningly and uncritically. Man is exhorted to ponder and reflect over it and interpret it in the light of his reason. "Will they not ponder over the Qur'ān?" (4 : 82). Men who find thinking irksome are described in these words :

These are they whom God's Law of Retribution has deprived (as a result of their own doing) of the blessings of life and has made them deaf and has blinded their eyes. Will they not then meditate on the Qur'ān or there are locks on their hearts (47 : 23-24).

The Qur'ān appeals to man's reason and understanding. Its teaching is couched in a language which is lucid and intelligible. "Thus God makes plain to you His Revelations that haply you may reflect" (2 : 219). The great truth to be apprehended by man is that he is the architect of his fate so that what he is in this world and what he will be in the Hereafter depend solely on his own actions. Good acts necessarily elevate him and bad actions inevitably degrade him. His welfare and misery are the result of his own deeds. He cannot shift his responsibility to others.

The Qur'ān insists that even success in war depends on the right use of reason. It is generally believed that an army which is inspired with courage and fired with zeal is sure to win. The Qur'ān claims that victory falls to the lot of men who remain cool and collected in the presence of danger and whose thinking is not clouded by passion. A hundred such men, the believers, are said to be a match for a thousand unbelievers who are swayed by passion, because they are, as the Qur'ān puts it, "a folk without understanding" (8 : 65).

It is clear that the Qur'ān assigns an important role to reason in the life of man. The *Nabi* is enjoined not to demand blind obedience from men but to exhort them to think and ponder. The following verse leaves no room for doubt that the Qur'ān encourages and approves of independent thinking :

> Say, I exhort you unto one thing. And what is that one thing ? It is that "ye awake, for Allah's sake by twos and singly. And then, reflect" (34 : 46).

The Qur'ān expects man to think and use his power of understanding. If he does this, he will be sure to follow the right path. The point to bear in mind is that the path which leads to success, that is eligibility for a higher plane of existence, can be discovered and followed only with the combined help of reason and revelation. These sources of guidance are supplementary to each other. If they are kept within their proper spheres, there will be no

conflict between them. The *Rasul*, therefore, is bidden to say :

This is my way. My invitation to you to follow Allah's path is based on reason and insight—mine as well as of those who follow me (12 : 108).

The Qur'ān challenges the opponents of Islam to produce arguments in support of their contention :

Ask them, (*O Rasūl* !) Bring your proofs if you are truthful (2 : 111).

They are admonished when they argue about things of which they have no knowledge :

Why, therefore, do you wrangle concerning that about which you have no knowledge ? (3 : 66).

Arguing about things of which we have no knowledge leads nowhere. The Qur'ān asks us to eschew such unprofitable disputes :

Do not pursue that whereof you have no knowledge. Verily, the hearing and sight, and the heart, each of these will be asked (17 : 36).

The Qur'ān lays stress on the value of correct knowledge and advises us to accept it and act upon it. All else is dismissed as mere guess work which is far from being a trustworthy guide to action. As the Qur'ān says : "A guess can never take the place of truth" (53 : 28). As rational beings, it is our duty not to stop till we have achieved correct knowledge. To be content with a mere "guess" is to denounce or abdicate our rationality, and to act upon it is to risk self-fulfilment.

The Qur'ān gives a sketch of the process of knowing, so far as it is germane to its purpose, which is both scientific and ethical. The process is begun by the activity of the senses, which furnish the raw material of knowledge. The next stage is that of attending when the mind addresses itself to the material reaching it. This is the stage of perceptual knowledge. The sense data are referred to external objects and events and their objective meaning is grasped. In the third stage, through

the processes of analysis, synthesis, abstraction and generalisation, the material is converted into knowledge of varying degrees of generality. The final stage is that of comprehension in which the new knowledge is placed and viewed in the context of the whole of human knowledge and experience, and its meaning for human life is assessed. The Qur'ān exhorts men to aim at this deeper understanding of the meaning of the *Nabi's* words, whenever he speaks to them. It denounces those who fail to make this attempt and stop at the first or second stage, being content with imperfect knowledge:

> And you may see them looking towards you, but they see not (7 : 198).

These were people who appeared to be looking intently at the *Nabi* and listening to him, but their mind was making no effort to grasp the sense of his words and relate it meaningfully to their lives. The Qur'ān makes an important distinction between "*naẓar*" and "*baṣar*." *Naẓar* refers to the fact of passively receiving certain visual stimuli. *Baṣar* is insight, the grasping of the essential meaning of the thing of which the visual stimuli are mere signs. The same distinction applies to other senses, such as hearing, etc:

> And of them are some who hearken to thee but will thou make the deaf to hear although they have no senses (10 : 42).

What the Qur'ān is driving at is that a man whose mind is clouded with prejudices and preconceptions, will not be able to apprehend the truth, even though it stares him in the face. To apprehend it, he must approach it with an open and unbiased mind, must concentrate his attention upon it and must strive to comprehend it in relation to his genuine knowledge and authentic experience. In effect, the Qur'ān recommends them an *aposteriori* approach to Revelation. By implication, the *apriori* approach is not favoured. The Qur'ān's position on this question may be summarised in this way: rid your mind of all preconceived ill-founded notions. Give close and earnest attention to the Revelation and have

full confidence (*Īmān*) in it. Relate the Revelation to the well-established facts of human experience. Project your findings into the future as far as your reason can take you along the high-roads lit by Revelation. Enrich your experience by the experience you have yet to experience. And, in the new vistas and the widened horizons that open up before you, identify the stars of your destiny and address yourself to the problems of life at hand. If you approach Revelation in a proper frame of mind, making full use of the powers with which you are equipped—reason and *Īmān*, hope and charity—you can apprehend the truth enshrined in it, and guided by it, can march forward to the glorious destiny that awaits you. But you must deliberately, and of your own free will, choose the path which is pointed out. God could have compelled you to be good if He had wanted. But such goodness would have had no value. Only goodness that you acquire through your own efforts has value. You are free to choose, and if you use your faculties aright, you will make a proper choice.

This, in brief, is the advice that the Qur'ān offers to man. It is reiterated in numerous verses. When the *Nabī* grew worried that people did not pay attention to his words and did not try to understand them, he was admonished in this way :

> If Allah willed, all who are on the earth would have believed (in Him). Would thou (Muḥammad) compel men until they are believers? (10 : 99).

To understand the Qur'ān or, for that matter, any other revealed book, it is not enough to have mastered its language. A man may be proficient in the Arabic language and yet the meaning of the Qur'ān may elude him. He should approach the Book with a receptive mind free from preconceived ideas and notions, prejudice and bias. He should be serious about human life and the universe in which we live, and should have an intense consciousness of participation in a purposeful cosmic process. He should also be anxious to guard against

pitfalls in the way of life and to steer clear of the obstacles which hinder his progress. These are, according to the Qur'ān, the essential pre-requisites for understanding the Book. To those who do not approach it in this way, it remains a sealed book. In the stories of the *Anbiya*—prophets recounted in the Qur'ān—we are told how those who were not perceptive and alive were only bewildered when they listened to their (*Anbiya's*) passionate exhortations. Some of them frankly confessed that they found their words unintelligible:

> O Shu'aib! We understand not much what you say (11 : 91).

The *Nabi* (Muḥammad—P) too, often came across people who were completely unresponsive to his words, while others were stirred, who believed and were prepared to listen. In dealing with the former, he occasionally grew impatient and felt frustrated. The Qur'ān counsels him to be patient, forgiving and tolerant. It warns him against the temptation to impose his views on them:

> Haply you will kill yourself with grief—if they believe not in this message (18 : 6).

The *Nabi* is assured that if he has placed the true view, in simple terms, before the people, he has fulfilled his mission. More than this is not expected of him. It is not his duty to see that the view is accepted by the people. His duty is only to tell them which is the right path and which the wrong one and to acquaint them with the consequences of following the one or the other. They are free to choose for themselves. God does not want to force people to accept His guidance. He has endowed man with the powers of understanding, judgment and free choice. If man makes use of these powers he can understand the Revelation and can profit by the guidance offered therein. He must bear the consequences of his choice, whether they are pleasant or unpleasant.

To sum up, there is no conflict between Revelation and reason: rather they supplement each other. *Īmān* in Revelation and reason together enrich life and make it

fruitful, provided each keeps to its own proper sphere. *Īmān* energises reason and reason orientates *Īmān* to concrete reality. Without either, life would be impoverished. Reason without *Īmān* is like a well-constructed machine which is not geared to a motor, while *Īmān* without reason is only a blind force. The glorious periods in human history were characterised by a robust *Īmān* and an active reason. Prof. Whitehead has rightly remarked:

> Ages of faith are the ages of rationalism.[3]

IV. Miracles

The subject of miracles bristles with difficulties and yet it challenges the attention of every student of religion. Such a student is called upon to define his attitude towards miracles and to explain his conception of the relation between religion and miracles. Here he faces a dilemma. On the one hand, modern man finds it well-nigh impossible to give credence to miraculous happenings. The only course open to him is to dismiss them as gross superstitions. For the scientist, nature is a closed system and any incursions of the supernatural into it are unthinkable. On the other hand, history testifies to the close association of religion with belief in miracles. The prophets of old were generally credited with the power of working miracles, so much so that a prophet was judged not by the value of his teaching but by the miraculousness of his deeds.

Whatever may be the case with *religion*, Islam, at least, lends no support to such superstitions. The Qur'ān appeals to reason. Its professed aim is to make men rational and clear sighted, not to make them superstitious. The Qur'ān directs man's attention to the phenomena of nature and the facts of history, as they reveal the power of God and His wisdom. Man is invited to look at and reflect upon the grandeur of the heavens, the beauty of the earth, the freshness of dawn, the glory of sunset and the terrifying force of the wind as it sweeps over the open spaces of

the desert. Pointedly, it asks: "Are not these marvellous? What more do you want?" The phenomena of nature, at once beautiful and mysterious, can fully gratify man's sense of wonder. However, the people with whom the *Nabi* of Islam had to deal were steeped in superstition. They were obsessed with the craving for the miraculous. They not only believed that the laws of nature could be violated but regarded such a violation as the only proof that could be offered for the truth of a statement. Instead of scrutinizing the rational grounds of the statement and accepting it if adequate evidence was adduced in its favour, they asked whether the man who made it could work wonders or not. It was not easy to deal with and win over people whose attitude to truth was so irrational. The *Nabi* did the best that he could in these difficult circumstances. With gentle persuasion he strove to turn their attention from figments of imagination to the concrete facts of life and history. He exhorted them to reflect upon nature and history and make a serious attempt to understand them both. With fervent earnestness he assured them that he did not claim the power to work miracles but that he rested his case on rational arguments and on the beneficial effects of his teaching. His opponents could not be expected to be satisfied with this simple explanation. They retorted that if he were a true *Nabi* he would surely have worked miracles; his inability to do so was proof that he had no valid claim to *nubuwwah*. The accusation was without foundation. If the *Nabi* had been an imposter, he could easily have worked on their superstitious minds. A single instance will suffice to prove his integrity of character. Soon after the death of his beloved son, there was a solar eclipse. People were frightened by the unusual darkness and they humbly suggested to the *Nabi* that nature seemed to be convulsed by the shock of his son's death. Without the least hesitation, he assured them that this was a natural phenomenon and had no bearing on his personal affairs. Nature goes on its course unconcerned with the calamities that may befall man. Only a man of his statuie could have refused to seize an opportunity of convincing people absolutely that he was

a miracle worker and, therefore, a true *Nabi*. The incident throws ample light on the essential honesty and integrity of the *Nabi*. No prospect of immediate gain could induce him to come to a compromise with the superstitious unbelievers.

The *Nabi* was consumed with the passion to reform the people and to induce them to accept the truth which he had placed before them. Their insistent demand that he should work miracles to convince them, made him despondent. On such occasions, the Qur'ān counsels him to remain firm and not to give way to despair. Sometimes, he might have thought that if only he possessed the power to work miracles, he could quickly have persuaded the people to accept his teaching and follow the right path. The Qur'ān did not leave even such a remote thought unanswered:

> If their aversion (to the truth) is grievous to thee, then, if thou can, seek a way down into the earth or a ladder into the sky that thou may bring to them a portent (to convince them all). If Allah willed, He could have brought them all together to the guidance; so be not thou of the ignorant (6 : 35).

God wants men to see and accept the truth through understanding and not dogmatically and irrationally:

> Those who do not use their intellect, the matter remains confused to them (10 : 100).

The Qur'ān calls upon men to apply their minds to its teaching, to strive to grasp its meaning and rationale. If they remain unresponsive to the call, the Qur'ān refuses to stoop to irrational methods of influencing their minds. It would rather leave them to follow the wrong path, if they have chosen it freely, than consent to any kind of compulsion, however well-intentioned, to lead them to the right path. Greatness may be thrust on some but goodness can be thrust on none. All that the Qur'ān does is, it sounds the warning, time and again, that if the thought-provoking faculties are suppressed for long, they would ultimately lose their power to kindle the pulse of thought. It says:

> Those who just go on rejecting the truth (without trying to understand it) it is all one for them whether you warn them (against the consequences of their actions) or not. They will not accept the truth. (As a result of their obstinacy, the law of Allah) has sealed their hearing and hearts and on their eyes is a covering. Theirs will be an awful doom (for they saw not reason) (2 : 6-7).

Those who possessed reason and did not use it to acquire true knowledge and to gain an understanding of the Revelation are denounced as the vilest of men and contempt is poured on them :

> And We have struck out for men in this Qur'ān all kinds of similitudes (to make the matter clear) but, notwithstanding all this, if you place before them a verse of the Qur'ān, those who disbelieve will surely say : You are but given to vanity. Thus does Allah seal the hearts of those who do not try to understand (30 : 58-59).

Again :

> And We send not Our messengers but as bearers of glad tidings and as warners (to those who tread the wrong path) : but those who reject the truth dispute with vain words that they may refute the truth thereby, and they take My Revelation and what they are warned of as a jest. And who does a greater wrong than one who being reminded of the laws of Allah, turns aside from them and forgets what his hands have sent on before. (This is how Our Law of Retribution) places veils upon their hearts, so they understand not, and a heaviness is in their ears. (The result of their obstinacy is that) though thou call them to the right path, they will never adopt it (18 : 56-57).

Again and again, in support of itself, the Qur'ān directs man's attention to natural phenomena and historical events. It justifies its teachings on verifiable grounds and on historical evidence. The Qur'ān assures man that his highest aspirations and ideals are attainable as he lives in a friendly and sympathetic universe, which is controlled by a wise and compassionate power. Miracles are repugnant to the consistently rational spirit of the Qur'ān. Those who demand miracles are occasionally humoured but are more often reproved in plain terms.

The view advocated here may, however, be challenged on the ground that the Qur'ān recounts many miracles which were wrought by the earlier *Anbiya*. There are several

possible interpretations of these miracles. Some scholars have had recourse to allegorical interpretation. Others have held that the figurative language and vivid imagery served to drive home a general truth. Another plausible theory is that the Qur'ān in describing people of an earlier age had to mention the unusual events which had psychological reality for them. However, it is a question which concerns the scholar who is interested in the mental development of man. It has no bearing on *dīn* as such. We subscribe to the view that they have been narrated metaphorically and can be interpretted rationally.*

At this point we deem it our duty to put in a word of caution. Events which have been reported in ancient books as "miracles" need not all be dismissed as the unconscious fabrications of credulous people. The mind of man may possess powers which are unsuspected by science. Some present day scientists are not so sceptical as their predecessors were. A new science, parapsychology, has sprung up and for the moment seems to be vigorously active. A few eminent psychologists are working in this field and have already collected evidence and discovered facts in the face of which dogmatic scepticism appears to be as absurd as the credulity of the ancients. Telepathy, clairvoyance, clairaudience and psycho-kinetic phenomena are being experimentally studied. All we can say at present is that the mind may well possess supernormal powers. We are learning the lesson that intellectual arrogance is an obstacle in the search for truth. Whatever may be the outcome of the investigations into the occult, the truly Qur'ānic response to the universe will remain unchanged. The question of miracles may enlist the interest of the scientist but it has no vital relation to a quest which has any connection with *dīn*. The Qur'ān seeks to awaken in man the consciousness of his intimate relation to the universe. Its main emphasis is on reason and knowledge. Its purpose is to help to build up a free, self-reliant and rational personality, vivified with the sense of God's working in the universe

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*I have given their rational interpretation in *Mafhūm-ul-Qur'ān*.

according to His unalterable laws. Therefore, miracles, if they mean freaks of nature or any alteration in the immutable laws of God, can have no place in that working.

We close this discussion with the following apt quotation from Iqbal which bears eloquent testimony to his deep insight into and perceptive appreciation of Islam:

> The birth of Islam . . . . is the birth of inductive intellect. In Islam prophecy reaches its perfection in discovering the need of its own abolition. This involves the keen perception that life cannot for ever be kept in leading strings; that in order to achieve full self-consciousness man must finally be thrown back on his own resources. The abolition of priesthood and hereditary kingship in Islam, the constant appeal to reason and experience in the Qur'ān and the emphasis that it lays on Nature and History as sources of human knowledge, are all different aspects of the same idea of finality.[4]

V. Approach to the Qur'ān

Our first task is to understand the real meaning of the Qur'ān with the help of all the intellectual faculties we possess. We can then proceed to assess the value of its teaching. How are we to test the truth and usefulness of the Qur'ānic teaching? The Qur'ān itself helps us to answer this question. It proposes three ways in which it may be tested and offers to abide by the results of these tests. It is significant that the tests proposed are all acceptable to reason. Nowhere is the supernatural invoked. The appeal is invariably to human reason and experience.

Before proceeding to consider the tests, let us recapitulate the teaching of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān enjoins man to believe in God, to follow His laws, to believe in one's own self, to love and serve his fellow-beings, to act in a virtuous manner so as to develop and express the best in him, and finally to believe in and prepare for the Hereafter. All these we are invited to test in the light of reason. Is there anything in this teaching that is repugnant to reason? No doubt it is possible to doubt the existence of God and the reality of the Hereafter. But then, it is also possible to doubt the existence of the

world. There is no conclusive proof of the existence of the objective world and some philosophers have argued, in all seriousness, that belief in such a world is unjustified. All that we can be sure of is the actual momentary sensation. In spite of philosophical arguments our belief in objective reality remains unshaken. Life pays little heed to the cobwebs of philosophers. The point to bear in mind is that suprarational realities are not less real because they cannot be proved by logical arguments. In applying the rational test it is permissible to ask whether there is anything in the teaching which runs counter to reason and to that part of human knowledge which commands universal acceptance. The question as to whether every element in it can be logically proved is inadmissible, because, the teaching, if it is to be true to its nature, cannot avoid reference to realities which transcend reason. In this case, the rational test will take the form of determining whether or not the teaching is in direct conflict with reason and whether it furthers the interests of humanity. It is needless to say that the Qur'ān has stood the test of reason and proved itself to be in harmony with the best in man:

> Say (O Muḥammad! to the unbelievers): I say not unto you (that) I possess the treasures of Allah, nor that I have knowledge of the unseen, and I say not unto you: Lo I am *malak*. I follow only that which is revealed to me.
>
> Say: are the blind man and the seer equal? Will ye not then take thought? (6 : 50; 11 : 24).

Secondly, the Qur'ān invites people to judge it in the light of history. It asks them to ponder over the rise and fall of nations. It assures them that if they seek the causes of the downfall of a people, they will find that the people had contravened the principles of right conduct and permanent values which were communicated to them by the *Nabi* of their age. Right belief and right conduct enable a nation to rise to power, and wrong beliefs and actions lead to its downfall. Time and again the Qur'ānic teaching, which confirms the teaching of earlier *Anbiya*, was put to the test and was found to be a trustworthy

guide to the good life. People who rejected it and followed the wrong path inevitably fell into decay and were overtaken by a dreadful fate. The Qur'ān advises men to pay attention to the facts of history in order to discover the difference between the ways of life of the nations which flourished and prospered and those which perished. It will be brought home to them that the latter cherished false and harmful beliefs and their conduct was not in harmony with the eternal laws of God:

> But they deny the knowledge that they could not compass and whereof the final result had not come unto them. Even so did those before them deny. Then see what were the consequences for the wrong-doers (10 : 39).

Finally we come to the pragmatic test. The unbelievers are repeatedly urged to apply this test and satisfy themselves about the truth and value of the Qur'ān. A tree is judged by the quality of its fruit and a creed by its effects on the life and conduct of men. The believers who had accepted the teaching and had regulated their lives in accordance with it, provided irrefutable evidence of its value to man. Their character had been transformed overnight. Formerly they were mean, selfish, quarrelsome, narrow-minded and self-centred caring only for petty gain. Afterwards, they were united in the pursuit of noble ends, were bound to each other by ties of love and affection, were kind and just to their enemies and lived up to the high ideals which they professed. The Qur'ān had brought into existence a new type of man—self-respecting, self-reliant, conscious of his worth and desirous of enhancing it and fired with the ambition to set up a better social order in the world. These men by their lives and actions testified to the value of the Qur'ān the spirit of which they had imbibed. The *Nabi* was fully justified in pointing to these men as a living testimony for the truth of the faith he preached. The astounding effect of the faith on the life of man was the strongest proof of its truth and values:

> Say: O my people! work in your own way. I too am working. Thus ye will come to know for which of us will be the happy sequel.

Lo! the wrong doers will not be successful (6: 136).

Such are tests which the Qur'ān desires to be applied. Even bitter critics will have to concede that the tests are crucial, practical and provocative.

Again and again the Qur'ān exhorts man to think and think hard. The man who uses his reason is held up to admiration:

> The blind man is not equal with the seeing, nor is darkness equal to light, nor is the shadow equal with the sun's refulgence; nor are the living equal with the dead (35: 19-22).

Those who think rightly can find the light of knowledge and can discover the path that leads to success:

> Are those who know equal with those who know not? But only men of understanding will pay heed (39: 9).

Again:

> Surely those who strive for Us, We guide them to Our ways, and verily Allah is with those who lead a balanced life of goodness (29: 69).

The Believers (*Mo'minīn*), according to the Qur'ān, are:

> Those who, when the revelations of their *Rabb* are presented to them, do *not* fall thereat deaf and blind (25: 73).

This is *Īmān*! Not to accept even God's revelations deaf and blind.

References

1. *The Great Design*, p. 35.
2. Ibid, p. 52.
3. Quoted by Iqbal in the *Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 2.
4. Iqbal, op. cit., p. 120.

Chapter VI

THE ROLE OF REASON IN DĪN

I. Reason and Passion

THE conflict between reason and passion runs through human history. Both are necessary for a full, rich and balanced life, but to reconcile them is an extremely difficult problem. Reason counsels prudence and caution while passion exhorts man to dare and take risks. "Look before you leap" says reason, while passion cries: "Leap and trust to fate. Do not waste time in looking." "Without the Bacchic element," says Bertrand Russell, "life would be uninteresting; with it, it is dangerous."[1]

In the history of thought, an age of reason has often been succeeded by a period of revolt against reason. Over-confidence in the power of reason has been followed by disillusionment with reason. The eighteenth century was the age of reason par excellence. We are witnessing the violent reaction against reason today. After a long period of unquestioned supremacy, its authority was challenged from various quarters. The poets of the Romantic revival insisted on the inherent worth of emotion and gloried in unrestrained expression of all emotions. The mystics were vociferous in claiming that emotion was a better and more trustworthy guide for man than reason. The philosophers did not lag behind in this outcry against the tyranny of reason. Schopenhauer glorified the blind will working through the universe and contemptuously dismissed reason as a mere tool in its hands. Bergson pinned his faith on intuition and resolutely set his face against reason. They sought

the help of the biologists in dethroning reason. The psychologists, under the leadership of Freud, questioned the view that man is a rational being and orders his life in the light of reason. In the Freudian theory the irrational unconscious plays the dominant role, while reason takes up the humble position of a mere servant. The intellect is compelled to invent specious reasons to justify the irrational operations of unconscious desires. No wonder that, subjected to violent attacks from various directions, reason began to totter on its throne. Men were disillusioned with reason and looked for guidance to irrational elements in human nature, such as will, emotion, instinct, intuition and mystical experience. It is high time we realised that the reaction has gone too far and we must redress the balance between reason and passion. Bertrand Russell wisely remarks: "It is not a conflict in which we ought to side wholly with either party."[2]

In defending the cause of reason, we must bear in mind that it is no longer possible to restore to it that position of absolute supremacy which was accorded to it by the rationalists. There is a great deal of truth in the criticism to which it was subjected. Prof. Joad's remarks deserve careful consideration:

> Reason tends to be exhibited as a mere tool or hand-maid of desire. Its function is to secure the ends which we unconsciously set ourselves, by inventing excuses for what we instinctively want to do, and arguments which we instinctively want to believe .... Reason is the power of deceiving ourselves into believing that what we want to think true, is in fact true.[3]

In another place he says: "A man's thought follows his desire much as the feet of a hungry dog follow his nose."[4]

The Qur'ān too has made pointed reference to how a man deceives himself when he is under the domination of a base passion:

> Hast thou seen him who chooseth for his god his own baser passion. Wouldst thou then be guardian over him. Or deemest thou that most of them hear or understand? (25 : 43-44).

These are the people who have permitted their reason to be perverted by base passions:

> Hast thou seen him who maketh his baser desire his god. The result is that Allah's Law of Retribution sends him astray, notwithstanding his knowledge, and seals up his hearing and his heart and puts on his sight a covering (45 : 23).

It cannot be denied that reason may often be enlisted in the service of selfish desires and base passions. In such a case, reason, instead of guiding man to the right path, leads him further astray till disaster overtakes him. The Qur'ān says:

> (Their fate) is manifest unto you from their (ruined and deserted) dwellings . . . . as they followed their base passions, although they were keen-sighted (29 : 38).

It is obvious that reason, when it is clouded by passion, is not a help, but a hindrance in the pursuit of worthy ends. It can guide rightly only when it is functioning properly. However, it is not the fault of reason that it sometimes leads us astray. The fault is ours, in allowing reason to be dominated by our passions. In a well-regulated mind, reason functions properly and gives right guidance. In a mature and solid character, all passions and desires knit into a harmonious whole and are organised into a rational system through the operation of reason. In such a character, reason plays a controlling but not a repressing role. Animal passions and sensual desires are not suppressed but only put in their proper place. On the other hand, a feeble or reckless character is not sustained by reason and, therefore, reason plays in it the minor role of a subservient to passion. Moreover, if reason has to have full play, it must be trained and developed like other faculties of the mind. Reason functions according to the role one gives it. The question is only of giving it the proper role. Otherwise, there is nothing wrong with reason as such.

We admit that there may be a conflict between reason and passion. However, the remedy lies not in suppressing one or the other, but in striking a balance between

the two. Reason as well as passion are valuable constituents. The elimination or weakening of either will leave a truncated personality. We have to discover a way of introducing harmony between the two and enlisting them in the service of man's best interests. This discovery has itself to be through reason. Passion is blind and can neither restrain nor direct itself. Reason can examine itself and can discover its own limitations. Passion, left to itself, will tend to suppress reason, but reason recognizes passion's rightful place in life and does not grudge it the satisfaction to which it is entitled.

Russell is no doubt right in advising us to refrain from siding wholly with either reason or passion. We agree with him, with the reservation that to side wholly with passion is much worse than to side wholly with reason. The Qur'ān speaks of the slaves of passion in no uncertain terms:

> And if they answer thee not, then know that what they follow is their passion. And who goeth farther astray than he who follows his passion without guidance from Allah (28 : 50).

II. Reason and Revelation

Scientists insist that whatever knowledge we have gained about this mysterious universe we owe to reason. This knowledge may be scanty, meagre and insufficient; nonetheless it is valuable and indispensable. Scientific investigation reveals reason at its best. Slowly and painfully science is increasing, bit by bit, our stock of knowledge. However, we may be permitted to ask whether there is any other avenue to knowledge, at least to knowledge that matters more—knowledge of our goal in life and how best it may be attained.

The advice that reason tenders us is based on the knowledge at its disposal. If the knowledge is inadequate, the advice is necessarily tentative, as if reason says: "Try it and see whether it works. If it does'nt, I would reconsider the matter and suggest something else." Reason can come to the right decision only when all the

relevant facts are placed before it. It is helpless when these facts cannot all be obtained. So far as the material world and the human body are concerned, we possess, today, sufficient knowledge. Reason can be relied upon to give the right answer to many a question that may arise regarding the body of man. But man possesses a real self also and our knowledge of it is pitifully inadequate. The real self is not susceptible to quantitative treatment of the scientist. Guidance to it can be given only in the light of eternal verities which transcend reason. Reason cannot apprehend Ultimate Reality and the self of man can realise itself only by the guidance of the Ultimate Reality or God. Hence arises the necessity for man to seek Divine Guidance without which he will remain earth-bound. In affairs relating to the physical world, we should always act on the advice of reason ; to reject which would be to court disaster. But when we aspire to fulfil our destiny, we would be ill-advised to place absolute reliance on our reason alone. We should seek the aid of Revelation which is the vehicle of Divine guidance. Reason functioning in the light of Revelation will guide us to the true path. By this view, Revelation supplements reason. In this way we will be fully equipped to tackle the problems of life and we would be guilty of gross ingratitude to God if we refuse to make use of the powers with which He has endowed us and the light (of Revelation) which He has given us.

We can now proceed to the consideration of another important aspect of the question. In practical life, reason helps us in two ways. Firstly, it tells us which of the things we desire are good and useful and which are bad and harmful. It judges things by the standard of self-interest. Things which contribute to self-preservation and the enhancement of life are certified as good, whereas things which are detrimental to life and diminish man's enjoyment of life and impair his capacity for development are declared to be undesirable, or not good. But reason does not merely pronounce its judgment on things. It throws its weight on the side of things judged to be good,

and induces man to choose them, even though his inclination and appetite favours the harmful things. When the choice is between useful and harmful things, a man who is guided by reason seldom fails to make the right choice. Science has placed at our disposal the requisite knowledge of the properties of material things and of their effects on man's health. On the basis of this knowledge, reason finds it easy to answer questions about which things are desirable and which are undesirable. In other words, so far as the physical self of man is concerned we are seldom left in doubt as to what things are beneficial and what not. But, as we have seen, man possesses a real self too, and we have only imperfect and fragmentary knowledge of this self. We cannot comprehend the real self, as it transcends human reason. The nature of the real self is unknown to us. It may even be impossible to know. We catch fleeting glimpses of it in value experience and in the consciousness of moral effort. All that we can say about it with certainty is that it is free, that it possesses unlimited capacity for development and that the urge to self-expression and self-development is inherent in it. We feel in our bones that a grand destiny awaits the self in us which constitutes the core of our being. But when our reason makes the effort to set a clear conception of our final goal, it recoils baffled and perplexed. All we can say is that we can attain the goal provided we live in accord with the eternal verities. These verities are hidden from our view and transcend our reason. We have to be content with the tantalizing glimpses we catch of them. No wonder that our reason, groping in the dark, longs for the light which would illuminate the furthermost reaches of life. This light is vouchsafed to us in the Revelation which has its source in God, Who, in the words of the Qur'ān, is "the Light of earth and heavens" (24 : 35).

So far, we have been concerned with the question of choice between good and bad. However, we are often called upon to choose between two goods, to sacrifice one good for the sake of another. How far can reason help

us in this more difficult choice? Let us illustrate the point with one or two examples. A situation may confront us in which we can save either our life or our wealth. Reason tells us to choose life and be resigned to the loss of our wealth. Again a situation may arise in which we can save our honour only at the cost of life. Reason tells us, though perhaps not as unhesitatingly as in the previous case, to save our honour rather than life. How does it do so? Obviously it refers to an accepted scale of values. The scale of values helps us to determine which of the two goods is the higher and which the lower. Reason then advises us to sacrifice the lower for the sake of the higher. The point to be noted here is that the values towards the top of the scale are not discoverable through reason. Knowledge of these presupposes knowledge of the heights to which the human self can rise in the course of its continued development. Here again Revelation helps reason over the stile. The highest value can be determined only with reference to the destiny of the self. The scale of values constructed by reason is useful, but it is incomplete. Revelation completes it by raising its ceiling.

Finally, science furnishes useful knowledge regarding the means by which we may attain our ends. However, it is silent on the vital question of what ends we ought to set for ourselves. The ends we ought to pursue are those which can fully satisfy our needs. The needs of the physical self are clearly perceived and easily satisfied. Food and water appease hunger and thirst. Reason can help us to secure food and water. The needs of the real self may be as insistent but are only dimly perceived. In the fitful light of reason, it is not easy to see the way in which they can be gratified. Here too reason is forced to lean on Revelation.

The distinction between physical self and real self, which runs through the above discussion, needs to be clarified further in the light of the Qur'ān. The distinction between body and soul, matter and spirit, is basic to the teaching of most religions. The Qur'ān does not

support this dichotomy. In the Qur'ānic view, man is not compounded of two distinct entities—soul and body. He is a single indivisible being. If we apply to him the categories of science, he appears to be a physical organism, but he reveals himself as a free being when "value" categories are applied. It is a view which is not dissimilar to the organismic theory developed by Goldstein and J.F. Brown. The Qur'ānic view parts company with the above theory in maintaining the reality of the higher self. It would seem that the real self of man takes on materiality without which it cannot function in the physical world of time and space.

III. Revelation and Values

It cannot be denied that knowledge of absolute values is indispensable for the right conduct of life and the unimpeded development of the self. But reason, the main instrument of knowledge we possess, tells us only about relative values. It cannot even give a definitive answer to the question as to whether there are absolute values and, if so, how can they be known. It tends to define value in subjective terms, only in relation to the particular experiencing individual. It amounts to a tacit denial of an objective system of values, valid for all men at all times. It is easy to see that this view cuts at the root of *dīn*. *Dīn* involves belief in objective, absolute values and in an objective, absolute moral standard. Reason, with its cautious experimental approach is constantly revising and reconstructing its scale of values and its moral standard in the light of fresh knowledge. Thinking men have, therefore, felt the need of some dependable source of values other than reason. On this point we cannot do better than quote the words of Martin Buber:

> The absolute values . . . . cannot, of course, be meant to have only subjective validity for the person concerned. Don Juan finds absolute and subjective value in seducing the greatest possible number of women and the dictator sees it in the greatest possible accumulation of power. 'Absolute validity' can only relate to universal values and forms, the existence of which the person concerned recognizes and acknowledges.[5]

Rashdall makes the same point:

> That there is one absolute standard of values, which is the same for all rational beings, is just what morality means.[6]

In the following passage, Rashdall contends that what is controversial is not the existence of an objectively valid Moral Law but only the manner of its existence:

> We say that the Moral Law has a real existence, that there is such a thing as absolute Morality, that there is something absolutely true or false in ethical judgments, whether we or any number of human beings at any given time actually think so or not. Such a belief is distinctly implied to what we mean by Morality. The idea of such an unconditional objectively valid Moral Law or ideal undoubtedly exists as a psychological fact. The question before us is whether it is capable of theoretical justification. We must then face the question where such an ideal exists, and what manner of existence we are to attribute to it. Certainly, it is to be found, wholly and completely, in no individual human consciousness. Men actually think differently about moral questions and there is no empirical reason for supposing that they will ever do otherwise. Where then and how does the moral ideal really exist?[7]

Having reached the conclusion that the moral standard must be based on a universal and absolute system of values, Rashdall proceeds to tell us that such a system can have its source nowhere but in the Divine Mind:

> An absolute Moral Law or moral ideal cannot exist in material things. And it does not (we have seen) exist in the mind of this or that individual . . . . A moral ideal can exist nowhere and nohow but in a mind; an absolute moral ideal can exist only in a Mind from which all Reality is derived. Our moral ideal can only claim objective validity in so far as it can rationally be regarded as a revelation of a moral ideal eternally existing in the mind of God.[8]

For this reason, Brightman says: "If we are to have a God at all, we must have a being that is a trustworthy source of value."[9]

Bergson discusses the question whether it is possible for human intellect to reach reality and gives a negative answer:

> Not through intelligence, or at least through intelligence alone, can (man) do so: intelligence would be more likely to proceed in the opposite direction; it was provided for a definite object and when it

attempts speculation on a higher plane it enables us at the most to conceive possibilities; it does not attain any reality.[10]

Einstein, the most eminent physicist of our time, frankly admitted that science can never give us "spiritual" guidance. He argued that only men to whom Revelation has been vouchsafed, could give us guidance in the "spiritual" sphere:

On the other hand, representatives of science have often made an attempt to arrive at fundamental judgments with respect to values and ends on the basis of scientific method and in this way have set themselves in opposition to religion. These conflicts have all sprung from fatal errors . . . . Science cannot create ends and, even less, install them in human beings; science can, at the most, supply the means by which to attain certain ends. But the ends themselves are conceived by personalities with lofty ethical ideals.[11]

The same view has been expressed by Joad, who, however, prefers the term "Intuition" to "Revelation". Intuition may be subsumed under *Waḥi*, if we bear in mind the wide sense in which it is employed in the Qur'ān. But intuition, it should be noted, is not synonymous with the *Waḥi* imparted to *Anbiya*; the difference between the two is not quantitative, but qualitative. Says Joad:

(Intuition) is its own authority and carries with it the guarantee of its own authenticity. For those truths which we know intuitively no reasons can be adduced, simply because they are not reached by a process of reasoning. Reason no doubt may be enlisted later to produce arguments in their favour.[12]

As the following passage shows, Prof. Cassirer too does not credit reason with the power of apprehending the highest values:

(In Greek philosophy) the power of reason was extolled as the highest power of man. But what man could never know, until he was enlightened with a special Divine revelation, is that reason itself is one of the most questionable and ambiguous things in the world.[13]

In short, while the authority of reason cannot be questioned in the world of fact, the realm of ends is definitely outside its jurisdiction. Revelation is the only source of our knowledge of the highest values.

Armed with adequate knowledge of values, we can, if we want, live and act in full accord with the immutable moral order of the universe. The knowledge does not consist in merely the recognition of a value as a value but involves a just estimate of the degree of worth possessed by it, so that it can be compared with other values. Confronted with a situation where we are called upon to choose between two values, we can then promptly choose the higher and sacrifice the lower value for the sake of the higher. Character is strengthened by our voluntary sacrifice of a lower value to secure a higher one. When a man has to choose between life and money, he does not hesitate to throw away money and save his life. Here instinct backs his choice; but the same man may be forced to choose between life and honour. It is a cruel choice and the man may not reconcile himself to the loss of either of the two extremely precious things. Reason will advise him to save honour at the cost of life, but he may not be entirely convinced by rational arguments. He may even make the right choice but for wrong reasons. He may choose honour, not because he values it more than life, but because he is afraid of incurring social disapproval and recoils with horror from the prospect of being a social outcast. He has made the right choice, yet has missed the feeling of fulfilment which should accompany the right choice. Choosing the higher value is an act of conviction or *Īmān*; conviction in the Revelation and in the Hereafter. On the basis of knowledge and experience, we may not be able to decide which of the two values is the higher. Reason may counsel suspension of judgment. We can suspend judgment but we cannot postpone action and when we have acted, we have already made the choice. We have no option but to decide on arbitrary grounds or on the basis of Divine Revelation. When the light of reason fails, we should let ourselves be guided by the light of Revelation. Revelation tells us about the ends of the human personality, which, by seeking to attain them, qualifies itself to continue its existence on a higher plane after death. To sum up, our only source of knowledge regarding ultimate values is Divine Revelation.

IV. Īmān is Indispensable

We hope that a few words on the necessity of *Īmān* and on its organic relation to reason will not be out of place at this point. Without it, man is like a boat without a rudder, drifting aimlessly and at the mercy of every gust of wind; with it, he is carried forward, step by step, to the objective of self-fulfilment and self-realisation. To the question: "*Īmān* in what?" the answer can only be, *Īmān* in God who sustains the universe, which reveals a few of the infinity of His aspects; *Īmān* in the reality of the human self and in its unlimited capacity for development; *Īmān* in the absolute values which set the goal to both human endeavour and cosmic process; and finally *Īmān* in a purposive universe.

We shall do well to give careful thought to Rashdall's views on the human self and on the purpose in the universe:

> The universe itself must have a purpose or rational end, a purpose which a perfect reason would pronounce to be good.[14]

Regarding the self he says:

> The self is a permanent reality; that reality is spiritual in so far as it has a permanent life of its own, not identical with the changes of the material organism with which it is (in whatever way) connected; and that the acts of man really proceed from and express the nature or character of the self for the simple reason that, only if we suppose that the present life of human beings has an end which lies in part beyond the limits of the present natural order in so far as that order is accessible to present human observation, can we find a rational meaning and explanation for human life as we see it; and by far the most natural and intelligent form of such a world-end is the belief in immortality for the individual souls which have lived here.[15]

Substantially, the same view is expressed, in simple and direct terms, in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān assures us that the creation of heaven and earth has a meaning. "They have been created in truth and for a purpose" (45 : 22), in order that "every soul may be repaid what it hath earned" (45 : 22). We are advised to reflect on the doings of the man "who has made his base desire his

god" and, in consequence, "has lost his way, in spite of his knowledge, insight and experience" (45 : 23). This misguided person equates the real self with the physical body and pays heed only to the demands of the body. It is men like him who say: "There is naught but our life of the existing world. We live and we die and naught destroys us save time" (45: 24). But the Qur'ān emphatically asserts that "they have no knowledge whatscever of all that: they do but guess" (45: 24).

The *Nabi* is advised to "withdraw from them, as they desire but the life of this world" (53: 29). Their mind is imprisoned within the narrow confines of present experience and the vast and limitless spaces of existence are shut out from their view.

Dīn, as well as moral life, is possible only for a being which possesses a permanent self. Value is relative to the person who experiences, and a system of absolute values has meaning only in relation to a real self. To deny the existence of a permanent self is to deny absolute values and the denial of absolute values entails the denial of moral standard too. An ethical code is based on a system of values. By achieving insight into absolute values we become capable of leading a moral life. Regarding the absolute values, the only dependable source of knowledge is Divine Revelation. Through intense reflection on Revelation, we can hope to understand the meaning and purpose of creation, the worth of the human self and its possibilities and destiny. We would do well to lay the following soul-stirring verse to heart:

> Lo! In the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of night and day, are surely signs to men of understanding. Such as keep before their mind the Laws of Allah, standing and sitting and reclining, and reflect on the creation of the heaven and the earth, saying: Our *Rabb*! Thou hast not created this in vain (3 : 189).

Waḥi (Revelation) illumines our path in the realm of values. However, we cannot understand *Waḥi* only by *faith*, nor through reason alone. What is needed for this purpose is a happy blend of the two. Reason wedded to *faith* leads us to the inner spirit of the Revelation. The

Qur'ān speaks of men who have grasped the meaning of the *Waḥi*, as "men of real understanding" (5:100). They are the true believers because irrational belief has no value (65:10). So far as the Qur'ān is concerned, there can be no real conflict between *Īmān* and reason. It speaks of those who believe as "having both knowledge and *Īmān*" (30:56). They are the twin stars that enlighten the path of man. In the West, however, conflict between faith and reason is a strand that runs through history. The warfare between science and religion (the title of White's famous book) ran its sanguinary course through several centuries. Only recently the truth has dawned on the Western people that reason and faith, far from being antithetical, need, as well as sustain, each other. Locke has made this point clear:

> He that takes away reason to make way for revelation, puts out the light of both.[16]

This is essentially the Qur'ānic view proclaimed in many a verse and reinforced by the clear pronouncements of the *Nabi*. It should be clear by now that it is not the purpose of Revelation to stifle reason and encourage blind faith to supplant it. The Qur'ān nowhere glorifies blind faith. Far from decrying reason, knowledge and experience, the Qur'ān insists on our making full use of our intellectual faculties to understand and appreciate the ultimate truth conveyed through *Waḥi*. The *Waḥi* helps reason to reach maturity. The human mind, having reached this stage, not only knows but *sees*. Seeing, here refers to the clarity of mental vision:

> Those who have due regard for God's Laws, when an encompassing temptation from *Shaiṭān* comes to them, they remember the Divine guidance, and Lo! they see (the truth) (7 : 201).

Many may know the truth through reason but he "sees" it in the right perspective when the image in the eye of *Īmān* is superimposed on the image in reason's eye. This clear perception of truth helps to lead man to peace and eternal happiness. It helps man to maintain a happy balance between the demands of his body and the demands

of his real self. The Islamic way of life has for its goal the development of the human personality in all its aspects. The believer, once he realises this, puts himself in the hands of the Creator and in return asks for the fulfilment of his personality. The Qur'ān referring to this bargain says:

> Lo! Allah hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth (9 : 111). For those who do good in this world there is a good reward (here) and the Hereafter will be still better (16 : 30).

In the mind of man, the Qur'ān seeks to implant *Īmān—Īmān* in life and in the renewal of life after death.

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Chapter VII

THE WORKING OF THE DIVINE LAW

I. God as a Dictator

MAN has conceived God in different ways at different stages of his mental development. The primitive man's crude anthropomorphic idea of God is in direct contrast to the abstract concept of the religious thinkers of today. We cannot, however, argue on this basis that God exists as a mere idea in the human mind. Our conception of the world too has exhibited similar changes. The savage looked on the world as the playground of capricious spirits, while the modern physicist analyses it into an infinity of transitory events grouped in various ways. Numerous conceptions of the world intervene between these extremes. Yet no one would give serious consideration to the view that the world exists as a mere subjective idea. In both cases, we are witnessing an apprehension of an objective reality. With the gradual development of his knowledge and mental powers, man brings his ideas into closer correspondence with external reality. His encounter with the world, as with God, is direct and immediate. He instinctively believes that both exist independently of him. But at first his idea of God is as imperfect and deficient as his idea of the world. He may never arrive at an absolutely perfect concept of God or the world, and yet his efforts in this direction never cease and are not wholly futile. In the case of God, Revelation helps us to form an idea which meets the needs of our intellectual and moral life. It will help us to grasp this idea clearly, if we first consider a view which was generally accepted in the past and still colours

our mental outlook.

For ages men lived under the monarchical form of government. Having known no other type of political organisation, they naturally believed that the only alternative to monarchy was anarchy and lawlessness. Kings were usually tyrannical, oppressive and capricious. If a king fell a victim to the fury of his oppressed subjects, his place was usually taken by a tyrant who might be worse. People brought up under such conditions naturally associated power with wilfulness and capriciousness. Believing God to be all-powerful, they also believed that He was more wilful and irresponsible than any earthly king and that His actions were as unaccountable as those of a dictator. In short, God was regarded as a glorified King, or rather as a magnified Dictator. He differed from the earthly dictators only in possessing immensely greater power, and in no other respect. Men of immature mind are impressed by power, especially when it is exercised to satisfy a passing whim. They suppose that God destroys any one, good or bad, for no better reason than to demonstrate His absolute power. The chief preoccupation of such people was the appeasement of God as they conceived of Him, and yet they could not think of any plan of action which would always succeed in appeasing an utterly capricious Being. No wonder that men felt helpless. They despaired of discovering, through reason, a way of life which would be in accordance with the Will of God, because they believed that God acted in an arbitrary manner and reason had no influence over His actions.

Men, no doubt, feared such a God but they could not possibly love and respect Him. This idea of God provided no incentive to seek a better way of life or to set about understanding the world in which they lived. In fact, there could be no way of life which was better than another—because the same action might at one time please God and at another time provoke His wrath. They saw that a sudden passing fancy might induce a despot to punish the man who had rendered a great service to

him and reward one who had been refractory. There could also be no question of seeking to understand a world which was brought into existence in an arbitrary way. It could have no law or order, no rhyme or reason. At best, it would be the scene of fortuitous events which could neither be foreseen nor controlled. Such are the implications of the idea that God is an absolute despot. This idea held sway over the mind of the savage.

With the increase in knowledge and growth of mental powers, the orderly succession of events around him could not fail to impress man. Gradually he sought and discovered the laws which governed natural events in the external world. Much later, he turned his attention to the inner world of the mind and in the course of this, discovered the harmonies which lie hidden behind the inner experience. Man, however, is much more conservative in the sphere of religion. The old idea of God, in an attenuated form, still lingers in the mind of the religious people and obscures their vision. The task of emancipating religion lies in casting aside this idea from our mind and accepting the idea presented by the Divine Revelation (Qur'ān). In order to grasp this new idea, however, it is necessary to give some thought to a few aspects of the Divine Will. The Will of God has an infinity of aspects, but three of them are of special interest to us as moral beings. What we have to say is based wholly on the Qur'ān which contains significant remarks on the Divine Will and its modes of working in different spheres. In fact, we shall only be expounding the views set forth in the Qur'ān as to the way the Will of God functions in itself, and in relation to the two main parts of the created world.

II. Divine Will According to the Qur'ān

Firstly, the Divine Will will be considered as it is in itself, in other words, as pure Will. Can we say anything more about the Divine Will than that it must be radically different from the will which we experience in

ourselves? The answer is that, within certain limits, we can characterise it with the help of Qur'ān. The first thing we note about the Divine Will is that it is absolutely free, subject to no restraint from outside itself. Again, it is incessantly and spontaneously active, not being dependent on any environment either for stimulation or for an outlet to its activity. It is self-subsistent and self-sufficient. It does not act upon a pre-existing material, confining itself to merely fashioning and rearranging it. Its activity is essentially creative. Indeed, it is the fountain-head of creative power. As a fountain-head, it is constantly exuberant with creative energy. Every moment new forms spring into existence at its behest:

> But His command, when He intends a thing, is only that He says to it: Be, and it is (36 : 82).

Again:

> Allah does what He will (14 : 27).
>
> Allah does what He intends (22 : 14).

God's Will is also free in the sense that it is above law. It is a law unto itself. It cannot be judged by an external criterion. Law, of course, flows from it and regulates its creation, but leaves it untouched. So the questions, why and wherefor, cannot be legitimately asked of the Divine Will. It is accountable to none outside itself:

> He will not be questioned as to that which He does, but they (everything in the universe) will be questioned (21 : 23).

The sphere of pure will is the sphere of absolute freedom. To subject it to law is to rob the Creator of His creative freedom, and of His omnipotence, and to reduce Him to the status of a created being. Turning to the nature of His creative activity, we find that it consists in self-expression. The Divine Will in creating is really expressing itself. Out of the infinite reservoir of its being, the Will of God is ceaselessly projecting and sustaining a myriad forms sharing reality in some measure and

reflecting, to some extent, the urge for self-expression which characterises their source. By regarding creation as an act of self-expression, we dispose of many questions which exercised the minds of former philosophers such as: What was God's purpose in creating? What induced Him to create? And so on. It is in the nature of an ego to express itself, and as God is the Absolute Ego, in His case, every act of self-expression is, at the same time, an act of creation. The reason and justification for self-expression must be sought within the being concerned and not outside it. It is wrong to look upon the Divine Will as an impersonal force. Will can exist only as an aspect of some ego. The Divine Will is really God engaged in disclosing the infinite riches of His being.

After creation, the Divine Will does not withdraw and leave the created world to shift for itself. Priests of the eighteenth century advocated some such view. However, it springs from a misconception of the relationship between God and the world. This relation is not by any means analogous to the relation between the producer of a mechanical device and his product. In the first place, the activity of the Divine Will is not intermittent: it is incessant. Secondly, the Will does not merely create the world but continues to sustain and foster it. These are not disjointed activities but aspects of the same composite, integral activity. Conceived in this way, the Divine Will is seen to be organically and vitally related to the world which literally exists and lives in God, the source of all being and the fountain-head of all life. The world, therefore, and all things in it are in direct and intimate contact with the Will every moment of their existence. The world contains two different categories of beings—the impersonal inanimate objects and the conscious and self-determining egos. The Divine Will is related in different ways to the two classes of beings, as each needs a different kind of support. The Qur'ān sets out these relations in clear terms. In Iqbal, we find a lucid exposition of the Qur'ānic distinction between *khalq* and *amr*. The following quotation from him throws valuable light on this

point:

In order to understand the meaning of the word '*Amr*,' we must remember the distinction which the Qur'ān draws between '*Amr*' and '*Khalq*.' Pringle-Pattison deplores that the English language possesses only one word—'creation'—to express the relation of God and the universe of extension on the one hand, and the relation of God and the human ego on the other. The Arabic language is, however, more fortunate in this respect. It has two words—'*Khalq*' and '*Amr*'—to express the two ways in which the creative activity of God reveals itself to us. '*Khalq*' is creation and '*Amr*' is direction.[1]

Let us look at these relations a little more closely:

(*i*) *The Divine Will and the Phenomenal World.* The dependence of nature on the Divine Will is absolute and unconditional. Determinism prevails throughout nature. Every physical object has been created with certain properties which condition its movements and its relations to other objects. Moreover, all material things are held in the firm grip of inexorable natural laws. These laws flow from the Divine Will and are at the bottom of the immutable order we find in nature. It is an orderly world because the Divine Will manifests itself in it as a controlling and regulating agency. Nothing can overstep the limits set by the natural laws. The behaviour of every thing is rigidly determined by the laws. Defiance is impossible. These laws are predetermined and unalterable. It is a world in which freedom has no meaning. It is a world which is ruled by an unconditional "must." Everything behaves in conformity with its natural properties and in obedience to the laws which govern it. Left to itself, water must flow downwards and warm air rise. Planets must move in their prescribed orbits and clouds must seek atmospheric regions of lighter density. The dominion of law extends even to seemingly fortuitous and catastrophic events such as thunder-bolts and earthquakes. In several verses of the Qur'ān, our attention is drawn to the rule of law and to the order exhibited by nature. We are exhorted to ponder on the regularity of natural phenomena. This regularity is the reflection of the Divine Will which is free from any trace of internal conflict or dissonance:

> And unto Allah maketh prostration (submits to His laws) whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth of living creatures (16 : 49).

In the words of the Qur'ān, therefore, there is no object in the heavens and earth which is not subject to His Will and to the Law which He has decreed for it.

Man, by making use of his reason, can discover the natural laws, and, equipped with this knowledge, can control the natural forces and exploit them for his purpose. A lawful and orderly world is the appropriate stage for a rational being like man to play his part and achieve his objects. Man can live purposefully, and can fulfil his self only in a world which he can understand and control. The following verse tells us that the world is a suitable place for a free rational being:

> And He has constrained the night and the day and the sun and the moon to be of service unto you, and the stars are made subservient to His command (16 : 12).

The conquest of nature is, therefore, not a pipe-dream but an attainable objective for man. He can understand the world because the order exhibited by it is intelligible and he can bring it under control for the same reason. The great strides made by science during the twentieth century testify to the fact that the world is amenable to human reason. As he ceaselessly explores the world and probes its nature, he brings to light hitherto hidden aspects of the laws that govern its working. No part of nature has been found to be impervious to reason. Recent advances in science have considerably increased and expanded man's control over nature. The entry into outer space, probes into the stratosphere and the discovery of atomic fission are magnificent achievements of which man can be justly proud. The point to note in this connection is that the minutest particles as well as heavenly bodies of stupendous magnitude are equally subject to fixed laws, and by discovering these laws man is able to predict their behaviour with accuracy. No doubt, modern physicists, such as Niels Bohr, suspect that the heart of the atom may be the citadel of indeter-

minism. The behaviour of the electrons as they jump from one orbit to another, is still unpredictable and does not seem to be subject to any law. Nevertheless, it would be rash to accept it as an established fact. With the progress of nuclear physics and the invention of more sophisticated instruments, laws which underlie the behaviour of electrons may be discovered and indeterminism may be dislodged from its last stronghold. In any case, man, in his practical life, has to deal with molar objects, and nobody yet doubts that they are subject to unalterable natural laws. When physicists are able to decide that indeterminism lies at the core of the atom, the bearing of this view on man will be considered in all its implications. At the moment, we can only advance the surmise that even if freedom turns out to be at the root of the universe, at the formation of matter it enters upon a long period of latency, only to blossom out again with the emergence of Man.

(*ii*) *The Divine Will and Man.* How does the Divine Will function in the sphere of man? To answer this question, we must not lose sight of man's dual nature. By virtue of possessing a body, man is a part of the physical world. As such, he is as much subject to natural laws as any other physical object. Birth and death are natural events, growth and decay are natural processes and these are governed by the laws of nature. But he is also endowed with an ego or self, and freedom is the breath of life to it. Freedom of choice is inherent in the self. It is free to choose any alternatives. The Divine Will has conferred on man a measure of freedom which is sufficient for his needs as a rational responsible being. Of course, this freedom has its limitations. It has to be so for a finite being: but in so far as his action is determined, not by any external agency, not even by a fragment of his self, but by his whole integral self (which is essentially rational), he is acting freely and is expressing himself. This is the freedom which man has a right to demand and which the Divine Will has granted him. This is indeed man's most precious possession. He can

rise to his full stature only in a social and political environment which puts no curbs on the freedom to which he is entitled. The achievement of this environment, however, still eludes humanity. It is extremely difficult, some would say almost impossible, to maintain proper balance between individual freedom and social stability. For centuries man has been trying to devise a social system which might reconcile the two. He has been experimenting with various forms of government and diverse types of social organisation. The search is still on, but we can discern the broad outlines of a stable and progressive society composed of really free members. We can also discern the guiding and supporting hand of Divine Guidance through the ages in this quest.

In the physical world, the Divine Will operates as a constraining and controlling force. The Qur'ānic term "*khalq*" refers to this aspect of the Will's working. In the world of autonomous egos, on the other hand, it performs the function of guidance. It leaves them free to decide what is best for them, but they are not left to grope in darkness with equal chances of turning to the right or the wrong direction. An indication of the direction in which they ought to proceed is provided to them. They are, however, free to accept or reject the guidance as they like. The Qur'ān makes this point clear:

> The truth has come from Allah. Then whosoever will, let him accept it, and, whosoever will, let him reject (18 : 29).

However, man, though free, is subject to the Law of Requital. Every action recoils on the doer. Right action has consequences which are beneficial to man and enrich and strengthen his self. Wrong actions invariably weaken and debase him. Right actions accelerate his progress towards the goal of self-fulfilment, whereas wrong actions drag him down to a lower plane. So, man is free to act in a wrong way but he cannot escape the penalty of wrong-doing. If a man chooses wrong he must meet the consequences thereof. The Law is relentless in its working like other Laws of God, and man cannot evade

the results of his own actions. As the Qur'ān puts it:

Verily, the grip of thy *Rabb* is severe (85 : 12).

At every moment in his life, man faces a number of possibilities, every one of which is "*taqdīr*," in the terminology of the Qur'ān. His freedom is limited only to the number of possibilities open to him. He is free to choose any one of them but he cannot go out of their range. He cannot, himself, enlarge the range of possibilities. He enjoys freedom within the prescribed range but not outside it. On this view, the apparent contradiction between the freedom with which man is credited and the destiny to which he is supposed to be subject disappears. Destiny must not be understood in the sense that each and every act of man is predetermined and preordained. The Qur'ān does not lend support to the belief that what man becomes—a saint or a villain—does not depend on his free choice but on the decrees of an impersonal inexorable Fate. In the Qur'ān's scale, destiny is not synonymous with *necessity* (or fatality, as they generally call it); it only denotes the range and reach of his capacities. It indicates in what directions he can go. How far he can go is determined by his destiny; how far he will go depends on himself alone. God does not dictate to man what objective he should have; He just gives him the helping hand in his efforts to attain the goal he has set for himself. Iqbal has expressed this relationship in a poem of exquisite beauty. We give the translation of a few lines from it:

The secret of the Ego's destiny is unfolded in these words:
'If thou changest, it changes in relation to thee.
If thou feelest like dust, it consigns thee to the wind.
Wantest thou to be a stone? It hurls thee against glassware.
Art thou a dew-drop? Thou art destined to fall downwards.
Dost thou become an ocean? Permanence is thy destiny.'[2]

We see, therefore, that in the sphere of free egos, the Divine Will operates as a directive agency, a guiding force. The Qur'ān designates this function of the Divine Will as "*amr.*" If we ask in what form this guidance is made available to us, the Qur'ān replies that it is provided in the Revelation:

This is Allah's "*Amr*" which He has revealed unto you (65 : 5).

The physical world is subject to inflexible laws which reflect the Divine Will in its aspect of "*khalq*"; "*amr*" is the source of moral laws which have meaning for and are obligatory on only a free self. By acting in conformity with the "*amr*," man creates values and appropriates them. When he dies, man does not shed the values he has realised during his earthly life. They are carried over and remain an integral part of the self, fitting it to function on the different plane of existence which it has entered. Values are imperishable. God not only guards and protects but enhances them for the benefit of the ego which has produced them through its own efforts.

III. The Qur'ānic View of God

It is thus clear that God, as He is conceived in the Qur'ān, is far different from an arbitrary ruler or a wilful despot. Of course, God is omnipotent and His Will, in its creative activity, is not subject to and restrained by any external law or rule. His Will is not a blind force, terrific and irresistible, which sweeps over the universe, destroying everything in its tempestuous course. It is the Will of an omniscient, all-wise, compassionate and benevolent Being. As such, it is intimately associated with wisdom and goodness, compassion and benevolence. In short, the Divine Will does not exist and operate in isolation. It is an aspect of the Divine personality. It may seem presumptuous to apply the term "personality" to God but there is no other word appropriate to the unique unity in the midst of infinite diversity which is God. The unity is transcendental and, to our finite mind, incomprehensible, but a few of its infinite aspects are accessible to our senses and reason.

To sum up, there are three distinct spheres in each of which God's Will works differently. In the realm of "*amr*," it is not subject to any laws: it is a law unto itself. In the universe which He has created, His Will assumes the shape of immutable laws to which all physical

beings are subject. These laws—the Laws of Nature—are called "*Kalimāt Ullah*" in the terminology of Qur'ān, and, as already stated, are immutable. "There is no changing the *Kalimāt* of Allah" (10 : 64). It is the unchangeability and immutability of these laws on which the entire edifice of science and the predictions we make in the realm of physical world are founded. So far as man, a being endowed with freedom is concerned, there are also laws governing the development of his self, but man is free either to obey them or go against them. In this domain, the will of man operates. Here the initiative lies with man and, in the words of Iqbal, "God Himself cannot feel, judge and choose for me when more than one course of action are open to me. He has, by permitting the emergence of a finite ego capable of private initiative, limited the freedom of His own free will."[3] There is thus no place for *fatalism* in Islam.

Man is free to choose for himself the course he likes. Once this discretion has been exercised, his freedom ends. The results are related to the course adopted. He is not free to make one choice and bring about results of another. His every action bears a definite result in accordance with the immutable laws of God. This is the Law of Requital which works inexorably in the entire universe, including the world of man. In the latter case, the result may come out in his present life or in the life Hereafter.

Finally, the world has been created by God Who is both all-powerful and all-wise. It, therefore, exhibits order and harmony, purpose and benignity. It is the home of values. It is amenable to reason. It provides man with opportunities for progress and development. In such a world, man can achieve knowledge and happiness. He can work out his destiny by making full use of his intellectual powers and by seeking guidance in the Revelation. It would be a grave error to suppose that there can be any conflict between reason and Revelation—they are complementary. Over-emphasis on either will lead man astray. Often there has been a conflict between science and the deadening dogmas of a barren theology

but there cannot be conflict between science and *dīn*. Ouspensky's remarks on this point merit careful consideration:

> A religion which contradicts science and a science which contradicts religion are both equally false.[4]*

Man needs the help of both science and *dīn*, if he wishes to bring himself into a meaningful relationship with God and the world.

References

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3. Iqbal, *Reconstruction*, pp. 95 ; 103.
4. P.D. Ouspensky *Tertium Organum*, p. 208.

**Religion* always contradicts science, and *vice versa*. It is *Dīn* which neither contradicts seience nor science contradicts it.

Chapter VIII

THE LAW OF REQUITAL

I. What is It ?

For the savage, as for the child, the world is the scene of fortuitous events none of which stands in an intelligible relationship with the other. With the growth of intellect, both awake to the presence of order in the world around them. The first thing they notice is the sequence of certain events—for example a flash of lightning is followed by a crash of thunder, and contact with fire is followed by burning. Knowledge of invariable sequence helps them to make better adjustment to the world. They become conscious of the causal nexus between events. They seek to know the causes of events, because this knowledge enables them to predict the effects and also to control them. They become aware that they themselves operate as causal agents producing changes in the world. The knowledge that all their actions have consequences gives them a sense of power as well as of responsibility. They realise that in choosing to act in a certain way, they are also choosing the consequence of their action. If the consequence is unpleasant and man wishes to avoid it, he can do so only by refraining from the action which leads to it. The Law of Requital states that every action of man has consequences and the doer will have to bear them whether he likes them or not. But far more important than the external effect of the action is its effect on the personality of the doer. All actions, however, do not necessarily modify personality. An action which has been performed inadvertently or carelessly has little influence on man's self. But an action performed

deliberately for a set purpose, or with a high degree of ego-involvement, changes personality for better or for worse. It strengthens or weakens the moral fibre. It furthers or hinders his progress toward self-fulfilment. This distinction between human actions is made by the Qur'ān and is of great importance to the moral life of man. The Law of Requital is specially relevant to the changes in personality which result from the voluntary actions of man. It means that consequences of such actions are inevitably incorporated in the personality of man, adding to or detracting from its power.

II. Man and the Law of Requital

Gradually man realised that he lived in a world which was not at the mercy of capricious spirits, but a world displaying a definite orderliness. He could adjust himself to the world only by discovering the laws which governed the events and processes therein. He addressed himself to this task and slowly and patiently acquired the knowledge which enabled him to exercise effective control over the world. Next he turned his attention to himself and to his own conduct. Here too, he discovered the rule of law. He found that he was free to act and choose but that rule of law required him to pay a price for the freedom he enjoyed. He had to bear the consequences of his actions. He could not disown the results of his own actions. He might yield to a sudden impulse and gain momentary satisfaction, but later regret and remorse were sure to prey on his mind and make him unhappy. He could not flout the Law of Requital with impunity. This law is as fixed and inexorable as any natural law. However, unlike the natural law which is confined to the physical sphere, the Law of Requital operates in three different spheres. We will now consider its mode of operation in each of these spheres.

1. Of the relations existing between events in the world, the causal relation is the most important. Where two events are related to each other, the antecedent event

or cause is invariably followed by the consequent event or effect. Cause and effect are relative terms. Each can be defined only in terms of the other. We are not concerned with cases where both the events are physical. These fall within the purview of physical sciences. But we have seen that man too acts as a causal agent in the world and his actions also produce effects. From the point of view of *dīn*, man's actions and their effects are seen as exemplifying the Law of Requital. The effect is what man earns by his action, whether he welcomes it as a reward or dislikes it as a punishment. If a man puts his hand in fire it gets burnt; if he plunges it in water, it gets wet. If he acts wrongly, the consequences are harmful to him. He has to suffer because he has brought the calamity on himself. It is his own doing and he cannot blame others. The child as it grows up, quickly learns how the Law of Requital works in the physical sphere and how, by respecting it, he may protect himself against physical injury and pain.

2. In the social sphere, the Law of Requital operates in the form of civil law. Society cannot exist without law and order. Actions which threaten the integrity of society have to be punished. Men often act in an anti-social way. Impelled by selfish desires, they often act in such a manner as to disrupt the group to which they belong. They can be restrained only by the knowledge that their wrong actions will bring upon themselves highly unpleasant consequences. A man may inflict injury on his fellow-being or rob him of his property, but he knows that afterwards he will have to serve time or pay a heavy fine. The prospect of suffering punishment deters him from acting against the interest of society. In a well organised society men are usually law-abiding because they see that everyone who transgresses the law is invariably punished. However, we must not forget that even in a well governed state, some criminals go unpunished while some innocent men are unjustly condemned. Human laws are not perfect and there are, in every society, serious defects in the administration of

justice. Cunning men, especially if they are wealthy, can often find some way of evading the punishment which they deserve. That is why every society has its criminals. The only remedy lies in perfecting the machinery of the administration of justice. Thus we see that the Law of Requital does operate in the social sphere, although its working is not free from defects.

3. In the moral sphere, the Law of Requital is seen in its purest form. Here it points to the necessary connexion between man's action and the ensuing modification of his personality. Man's action, besides producing effects in the world and in society, produces also effects within him, changing his self for better or worse. External factors have no effect on a man's personality. Man can be free although he is confined in a prison cell. On the other hand, though outwardly free, he may have a cramped and inhibited personality. Human personality is keenly sensitive to the moral tone of his actions. Every transgression of the moral law debilitates it in its ability to play its proper role. The working of the Law of Requital is much more subtle in this sphere than in other spheres. A man may casually take a wrong turning and may go on committing trivial misdeeds, without being aware of the gradual harm he is doing to his personality. One day, he will be shocked when he realises the cumulative deterioration in his personality. Though subtle, the working of the Law of Requital in this sphere is relentless. Every action leaves its effect, good or bad, on the personality. The effect at a time may be so slight as to be hardly perceptible, but if the man continues to act in the wrong way, the cumulative effect may transform his personality. The infection of bad actions may be negligible at the beginning but it works insidiously, and gradually undermines the self. The man who is morally sensitive can perceive this effect coming about and check himself in time and retrace his steps before an irretrievable damage is done.

III. Its Working

All our actions are not subject to the Law of Requital. Involuntary acts and those performed heedlessly or with little ego-involvement may be regarded as morally neutral. But deliberate acts, through which we express our real self and which we can acknowledge as our own, are inevitably rewarded if right, and punished if wrong. The moral order in the universe is based on this Law. We can claim only what is due to us. Only right actions entitle us to reward. The Qur'ān confirms this view:

> And unto Allah belongs whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, that He may (according to His Law of Requital) reward those who do *A'māl-us-Sayyiah* with what they have done, and reward those who do *A'māl-ul-Ḥasanah* with goodness (53 : 31).

God has granted man a measure of freedom but He keeps watch over man to see how he uses the freedom:

> And He it is Who created the heavens and the earth . . . . that He might afford you opportunity to show which of you is best in conduct (11 : 7).

The Qur'ān declares that God "sees" not only the overt actions of man but also his inner motives and hidden intentions, and His judgment of man is on this broad basis:

> Alike to Him is he among you who hides his word, and he who speaks it aloud, and he who hides by night and he who goes forth openly in the day. He has pursuers from before him and from behind him, who watch him by the command of God. Lo! Allah does not change the condition of a folk until they (first) change what is in their own selves (13 : 10-11).

Whatever man desires, he must get through his own efforts. If it were offered to him as a free gift, it would not benefit his personality. He cannot hope to deceive God by a pretence of striving. He must strive earnestly:

> There are guardians over you, who are honourable reporters (82 : 9-10).

And again it is said:

> We created man and We know what his mind whispers to him; and We are nearer to him than his jugular vein (50 : 16).

The Qur'ān assures man that his actions are not like ripples on the surface of a lake, vanishing one after the other for good. On the contrary, they leave indelible imprints on his personality. They are entered on the debit or credit side of the ledger kept for him :

> And on every man We have fastened his record about his neck ; and We will bring forth to him, at the time of judgment , a book offered to him wide open (17 : 13).

Man bears responsibility for all those actions in which his self was involved. If the action was wrong, he has no option but to submit to the "punishment" which is the necessary result of his action. It will not avail him to offer excuses, that he acted heedlessly in a fit of abstraction, or with a good intention. His own heart will bear witness against him :

> Oh, but man is a telling witness against himself, although he tenders his excuses (75 : 14).

The Law of Requital works unerringly. There is a necessary connection between acts and their effects. Good actions are necessarily rewarded and wrong actions are invariably punished. In social life, however, the connection between a socially approved act and its reward is external and contingent. Let us illustrate this point. A man undertakes to perform a job on the understanding that he will be paid an agreed sum of money on its completion. He may do the work but may not get the reward. His employer may die, become insolvent or prove faithless. On the other hand, the connection between moral actions and their effects is internal and necessary. The effect is on the personality of the doer. If the effect is good, the doer is carried forward towards his goal of self-realisation; if it is bad he is necessarily thrown back. Every moral act works consequential changes in the human personality. These changes may be in the direction of greater integration or of disruption. They may or may not be conducive to "spiritual" health. The requirements of "spiritual" health are different from those of physical health. Suppose a man somehow finds himself in possession of a sum of money and spends it to

buy butter and eggs. His health will improve on this nourishing diet. Whether he had honestly earned the money or had stolen it, makes no difference to the effect on his health. But his "spiritual" health is a different matter. It will suffer if the money had been stolen, even if he has put it to a good use. We have, therefore, to distinguish between the physical effects of our actions and their moral effects. The Law of Requital, in the moral sphere, refers exclusively to the moral effects, to the enhancement or deterioration of the human personality.

The above discussion leads to the following conclusions:

(a) Man's voluntary actions directly influence his personality.
(b) Dedication to a noble end results in the development of personality.
(c) Indifference to, or denial of, absolute values leads to the disintegration of the self.
(d) Man is responsible for his actions and must accept their consequences.
(e) Man cannot shift the responsibility to any one else.

The Qur'ān lays stress on this last point:

> Whosoever commits a wrong, commits it only against himself (4 : 111).

Again:

> Whosoever goeth right, it is only for (the good of) his own self that he goeth right, and whosoever erreth, erreth only to its hurt. No laden self can bear another's load (17 : 15).

Man's responsibility for his actions is again stressed in the following verse:

> Each soul earns only on its own account, nor does any one bearing a load shall bear another's load (6 : 165).

The following verse leaves no doubt on the point that man can attain his goal solely by his own efforts. No

external help will avail him at all:

> No self will in aught avail another, nor will intercession be accepted from it, nor will atonement be received from it, nor will they be helped (2 : 48).

It is not only individuals who are subject to the Law of Requital: nations too have to suffer if they fall into wrong courses. However, if a nation adopts a wrong course of action, it may be years before it begins to experience its effects. The law may operate slowly in the case of nations, but sooner or later every nation will have to face the consequences of its wrong actions. (The point will be elucidated in a subsequent chapter).

Finally, for the question as to what actions are right and what actions are wrong, the answer is supplied partly by reason and partly by Revelation. Revelation gives general guidance and broadly indicates the difference between right and wrong actions. Human reason acting in the light of Revelation, cannot miss the right path. Revelation, again, may be tested by acting upon it and examining the results. The Qur'ān offers to be judged by this pragmatic test:

> Say (O Muḥammad)! O my people, work according to your power (and plan). Lo! I too am working (according to mine). Thus you will come to know for which of us will be the happy sequel. Lo! the wrong-doers will not be successful (6 : 136).

The Qur'ānic concept of the Law of Requital raises a very vital question which requires serious consideration. We have seen that this law is based strictly on *justice*. The point for consideration is whether it has any place for "forgiveness" or "mercy"? The reply is both no and yes. If I do some wrong to somebody else, he may forgive me, i.e., may not take revenge from me: but if I do wrong to my own self, none can forgive me. Similarly, mercy is an emotional reaction which can obviously find no place in the working of law and justice. Still, there is a place for "forgiveness" and "mercy" as will be seen from the following example. You put your finger in fire and it gets burnt. And you must suffer the consequence—the pain and agony which is its inevitable result. There is

no question of anybody forgiving you or taking mercy on you. But the same God Who has made the law that fire burns and pain is its inevitable result, has made another law. It is that a certain medicine has the property of giving relief to the pain and effacing the devastating result of burning. A recourse to this law of God would do away with the painful result of your former action. The provision of this second law is "mercy" from God, and obedience of this law results in "forgiveness" of our wrong doing. This law is as universal as the former one and does not work differently in different individual cases. Nor has it any appeal to emotion. This is the Qur'ānic concept of "forgiveness" and "mercy." The point will, however, be discussed further in the next chapter.

Chapter IX

SALVATION

I. *Religion and Salvation*

EVERY human activity is directed to some end. The end may be clearly formulated or may only be dimly perceived, but some kind of end desired by man is necessary to rouse him to action. Man's activity becomes intelligible only when we know the goal he is seeking. Religious activity too is goal-directed. It aims at the attainment of some objective, which, rightly or wrongly, is believed to satisfy the spiritual longing of man. Most of the higher religions of mankind agree in regarding salvation as the ultimate goal of religious endeavour. It is believed that the purpose of religion is to help man to attain salvation. They differ as to the means by which salvation may be attained, but they are one in regarding it as the only end which a wise man can desire. Because of its essential role in many religions, it will be worth while to take a closer look at the concept of salvation and to examine its underlying supposition. Salvation means the saving of the soul, or in other words, its deliverance from sin and its consequences. The supposition on which the idea is based is that even at birth the human soul is stained by sin. This stain can be wiped out only by leading a devoutly religious life. It is obvious that the doctrine of salvation is based on a belief in original sin. The soul of the new-born infant is, it is said, already infected with evil and the infection will grow and spread unless it is checked by religious belief and action. Man is born under the shadow of sin. He can dispel it only by submitting to a rigorous religious

discipline. The followers of most religions are obsessed with the idea of sin and their chief aim in life is to loosen its hold on their souls. Each religion has its own distinctive view as to the source of sin and the means by which it may be eradicated.

In Hinduism, *Mukti* or salvation is conceived as liberation from *Avagawan*, or the cycle of death and re-birth. The doctrine of *Karma* offers an apparently reasonable answer to the question why one man is born with a silver spoon in his mouth while another is doomed to a life of misery. It is because in the previous life the former had lived virtuously while the latter had committed sins which he has to expiate in the present life. If the purpose is to instill the love of virtue and hatred of evil in the mind of man, it is hard to see how it can be accomplished through the cycle of death and re-birth. No memory of a former life lingers in the mind of man, and so he cannot consciously relate his present distress to the evil deeds he had committed in the previous life. No doubt, a few instances have been recorded of man recalling the experience of a previous life. It is, however, safer to regard these as cases of paramnesia than of genuine recall. The concept (of the cycle of death and re-birth) which was borrowed by Hindus from the early Greeks, has not stood the test of time and is being discarded by the present day Hindus.

Vedantic philosophy presents the same idea in a slightly different form. It is essentially a pantheistic creed. The individual soul or *Jivatman* has its source in the cosmic soul or *Parmatman*. It was separated from its source because of some unspecified cause. The soul is lonely and unhappy and longs intensely for re-union with its source. This it can achieve only by running away from the world of matter and submitting to the rigorous discipline which is prescribed in the Vedas. Salvation for the *Jivatman* lies in its merging again in the infinite *Parmatman*.

Buddhism takes a still more pessimistic view of human life. Man's life is wrapped in gloom, relieved only

by occasional fitful gleams of happiness. Pain is inseparable from life. Buddha taught that the source of human misery is desire. Some desires are insatiable. Others may be satisfied, but fresh desires spring up in their place. Desire keeps us restless in this life and chains us to the cycle of death and re-birth. To attain salvation, we must eradicate desire from our heart. Peace and happiness are unattainable in life. When desire has been rooted out, the way to salvation or *Nirvana* lies open before us. He who has not extinguished desire in himself is doomed to be re-born, to suffer pain and misery during a whole lifetime. Existence is an evil and we can throw off its yoke only by ceasing to exist. The wise man, therefore, aims at annihilation, non-existence. *Nirvana* is not a state of positive happiness but a negative state characterised by absence of feeling and, therefore, absence of pain.

Christianity inculcates in its followers the dogma of "original sin." Adam and Eve were guilty of disobedience to God, and were punished by being expelled from heaven. Every man is born with a soul stained by the original sin. He can wipe out this stain only by believing in Christ and living a life of asceticism and hard discipline. Salvation means the regaining of the state of bliss which was forfeited by man through sin. Man gains his salvation not by daring adventure and glorious achievement but by self-abnegation and refusal to participate in the affairs of the world. The ideal is not self-fulfilment but self-renunciation. Such was the teaching of the Church in the medieval age.

The Jews, too, were obsessed with the idea of sin and its consequences. They lived in terror of hell, where, they believed, they would suffer for their sins, as well as for the sins of their forefathers. They thought that they could escape this doom only by the punctilious performance of an elaborate ritual. All that salvation meant was to be saved from hell-fire.

It is obvious that in all these creeds, the emphasis is on the negative aspect of salvation. Salvation is

conceived not as a positive achievement, the acquisition of some new value, but as deliverance from the evil which clings to man from birth. In Islam, the emphasis is on the positive side of "Salvation." Islam demands that man should be oriented to the future, that he should bend his efforts to the realisation of new values and the attainment of new levels of experience. Islam discourages man's preoccupation with the past: instead it fosters hope in the future. Man's objective in this life should not be to regain a lost paradise. He is encouraged to create a new paradise for himself in which all his capacities may have full scope for development. This he can do, not by withdrawing from the world and fixing his gaze on the past, but by being fully alive to the present and by making full use of the opportunities that this life offers. The purpose of Islam is the reorientation of man to life, so that he may wake up to the immense potentialities inherent in him. His "salvation" lies in discovering the possibilities open to him, and in choosing the one which is likely to prove most fruitful. Islam gives its approval to the forward-looking attitude and to the belief that man can work out his "salvation" not by annihilating or contracting his self but by creating conditions in which it can develop to its fullest extent.

II. The Qur'ānic Concept of Salvation

The Buddhist, Christian and Hindu doctrines of salvation have a great deal in common. In each, the emphasis is upon liberation from sin, upon rescue from evil. In each, the objective is a return to the previous state of innocence and bliss. As sin is supposed to be inseparable from life and the phenomenal world is believed to be the abode of evil, it follows that liberation can be achieved only by renouncing the world. This doctrine appears in its purest form in Buddhism. It has been to some extent toned down in Christianity and Hinduism. It must be admitted that during certain periods of human history, the doctrine attracted large numbers of men and cast its spell even on men of learning

and intelligence. It is a fact that during these periods, men had suffered acute frustration and were disillusioned with life. Having nothing to hope for in this world, they centred their hopes on the other world where they might get all that they had missed in this world. This doctrine is the product of disillusionment and defeatism. It is clearly repugnant to men who are sane and normal. It is in direct opposition to reason, to experience and to the progress of mankind. Hope cannot be killed—it springs anew in the human heart. When man has recovered his natural buoyancy, he recoils with horror from such a dismal doctrine. He tends to look on the world of matter as a field for varied fruitful activities. He refuses to believe that his soul will be blighted by the slightest contact with the world. The doctrine also implies that the world has no purpose or design. If accepted wholeheartedly, it will prove to be a stumbling-block to human progress. It deprives man of all zest for life and of the desire for progress. If ever it becomes the dominant creed, humanity will be doomed to stagnation and decay. All the healthy instincts in man rebel against such a barren concept. To believe in a God Who has created a world which should be shunned is derogatory both to God and man.

The Qur'ānic concept of salvation is of a different kind, and, as it will become clear in the course of this exposition, attuned to the constructive and progressive forces in man. In the first place, the world of matter is regarded as embodying a purpose—a purpose which is consonant with the purpose inherent in the human self. The following verse should be noted :

> And We created not the heavens and the earth, and what is between them, in sport (21 : 16).

It is a world which is responsive to man's needs, both physical and human. It is a world which man, if he likes, can mould "nearer to his heart's desire." It is a world which offers full scope for the development and fulfilment of his being. Knowing that he can engage in fruitful activities in the world, he has no excuse for

infirmity of purpose.

Moreover, in the Qur'ān, the emphasis is on the positive content of salvation. It is not conceived as a negation of pain and liberation from evil. It consists in the sense of fulfilment, the feeling of realisation and the thrill of expansion. Man is endowed with a number of potentialities. By developing these he reaches his full stature and qualifies for still higher stages awaiting him. Man must discover in what direction his self can develop and then he must create the conditions, physical as well as social, which favour the development. His main task in this life is to develop his self by conquering the forces of nature and employing them for the development of mankind:

He is indeed successful who causeth his self to grow, and he is indeed a failure who stunteth it (91 : 9-10).

III. *Life—A Struggle*

Life is a constant struggle against forces hostile to it —forces which would destroy it if they were not successfully opposed. In the external environment, there are wide variations in temperature. Sometimes it is too cold for man, sometimes it is too hot. Homoeostatic mechanisms in the body usually keep the body temperature at the normal level. Without them, the human body would burn up or freeze to death. Again, the body is assailed by a variety of pernicious germs which tend to destroy it. As long as man lives, he keeps up the fight against these destructive forces. The struggle ceases only with death. It is, however, not only on the physical plane that the struggle is carried on. On the moral plane too, he has to struggle against forces of destruction which would disintegrate and disrupt his self. Here the problem is more difficult and complicated, as the self has to contend with the destructive forces of the external world as well as the impulses of debasing animality which rise in man if not checked. Man naturally looks around for help as he very often finds it difficult to keep the

enemy at bay. The Divine Guidance in the Qur'ān offers man effective help in the moral struggle. This help is given according to a definite programme. The first part of the programme may be characterised as prophylactic. It helps man to guard himself against both the open and insidious attacks of destructive forces. This form of help is termed *maghfirah* in the Qur'ān. *Ghafrun* means "to cover" and *mighfar*, which is derived from it, means the helmet which protects the head of the warrior from the blows of the enemy. The Qur'ān protects the human self just as effectively from the blows of destructive forces. Man quails when he finds himself facing the formidable array of the forces of destruction. He begins to weaken and to give way to despair. The Divine programme prevents him from yielding to *bāṭil* by replenishing his store of moral energy and by inspiring faith in his heart that the *ḥaqq*, though weak at the moment, will finally prevail over *bāṭil*. Man may feel defenceless against the forces of *bāṭil* but when the Divine Revelation has instilled in his heart *Īmān* and courage, he enters the arena with renewed confidence and hope. This is how the first part of the programme helps him. The second part, *tauba*, in the terminology of the Qur'ān, is curative. Many may have yielded to *bāṭil* and may have followed the wrong path. Even then, the Qur'ān says, their case is not hopeless. *Tauba* offers them a sure remedy. *Tauba* is derived from the root *tāba* which means to return. *Tauba*, therefore, does not mean vain regret or futile remorse. It means that when man realises that he has been following the wrong path, he should have the courage to stop and retrace his steps. In this sense *tauba* means heart-searching, re-appraisal of the situation and re-assessment of the policy he has been following. Suppose a man suddenly realises that the path he has been following is taking him farther away from his real goal. If he is wise, he will not merely sit down and give himself up to unrestrained grief. He will resolutely hasten back to his starting point and when he has reached it, he will, after due deliberation, choose a new path. *Tauba*, on the moral plane, represents the

same sensible way of acting. But *tauba* has in it an ingredient of Divine help. The man who has realised his mistake and is eager to rectify it, is not left to his own resources. Unstinted Divine help is given to him in the shape of Divine guidance which never errs. Otherwise, the sense of having wasted his time and the feelings of uncertainty about the results of his further efforts will weigh heavily on him and will hamper his efforts to regain the right path. The Divine help, the concomitant of *Tauba*, refreshes and re-invigorates him so that he acts with re-doubled energy. In short, *maghfirah* assists a man in warding off the blows of *sharr*, but when he is hit, *tauba* helps to repair the damage done. It should be noted that *tauba* is not a passive act of regret; it is positive effort at restoration of the lost position, with regeneration of energy born out of hope and confidence. *Tauba* is not merely withdrawal from what was destructive; it is the annulment of its consequences. Says the Qur'ān :

> Lo ! good deeds annul ill deeds (11 : 114).

Tauba thus fortifies the constructive forces in man and enables them to repair the damage to the self, which was caused by his destructive deeds. The Qur'ān assures man that if he does not surrender himself to *sharr* on the big issues, his paltry lapses will not be permitted to impede his progress to his goal :

> And if ye avoid the great things which ye are forbidden, We will remit from you your lapses and make you enter a noble gate (4 : 32),

since the constructive results of your noble deeds outweigh the destructive consequences of your lapses.

IV. Conclusion

We have since considered two different views of salvation. It will be seen that the concept of salvation set-forth in the Qur'ān is a positive achievement as against the negative and barren concept of escapism favoured in certain quarters. The latter springs from a

misplaced notion of man's nature and from a misconception of his relationship to the world. It throws man into the turmoil with the handicap of a tainted soul in a perverse world, giving him the only recourse of renouncing the combat and fleeing from it. Why set such a futile stage at all ? Divine purpose runs through the world, a purpose which is akin to the purpose for which man is endowed with a self. No doubt, the odds are set against him. But the obstacles are there not to frustrate him, but to call forth the best in him. They are designed to put him on his mettle and permit the indomitable spirit he possesses to reveal itself in all its glory. Man develops his powers in the course of overcoming obstacles. Frustration forces him to reconstruct his personality. Rebuffs and set-backs toughen and harden him and by facing them he develops a mature personality. So we see that even when the world at times appears to be stern and unkind, in the long run it turns out to be man's ally and not his foe.

Certainly man often goes astray. As a free being, it is his privilege. When he commits a mistake, he has to pay the price for it and in the process he realises that he is fully responsible for his action and that the freedom he enjoys is real and not illusory. To err is human, and it is natural for man to commit a mistake now and again. If he acts wrongly, his self is stained, but the stain can be removed. If he realises his mistake and sincerely tries to make amends for his wrong-doing, he can recover his poise. This is the truth that is clearly set forth in the Qur'ān. The Qur'ān is a gospel of hope. It forbids man to give way to despair. A man may have led a wrong life for years but if he resolutely turns his face in the right direction and persists in acting rightly, he will not find the path to self-realisation blocked for all time. Right actions nullify wrong actions. The man who is saved is not one who has never committed a mistake, which is impossible, but one whose right actions outweigh his wrong actions. Says the Qur'ān :

Then those whose scales are heavy, they are the successful.

And, those whose scales are light are those who lose their self (23 : 102-103).

What exactly is meant by saving one's self or losing it? These phrases become intelligible only when viewed in relation to the goal-seeking activity of the human self. The deepest urge in man is for self-development and self-realisation. When he is making progress towards this goal, he feels happy and knows that he is on the way to qualify himself for promotion to a higher plane of existence. For the self lives in and through activity, and the activity natural to it is always in an upward direction. Inaction is the death of the self, and so is movement in a downward direction. When the self of man is making steady progress towards the goal, it may be with occasional deviations and backslidings, but it slowly moves forward, until it finds itself in a state which is symbolised by *Jannah* or paradise. The picturesque imagery with which it is represented, has misled many into thinking that it is a *place* which provides gratification for the senses. It is not a *place* but a *state of mind*, a state charged with the sense of fulfilment and the feeling of high aspiration. It is akin to the feeling that the mountaineer experiences when, after wearily climbing the hillside and avoiding boulders, he finally reaches the lofty peak. Loftier peaks swim into his vision and invite him to fresh conquests. For him it is at once the end of a journey and the beginning of another. His joy at successful achievement is blended with the thrill of excitement at the discovery of fresh fields for adventure. Such is the state of mind of those who have fully realised themselves on the human plane and are ready to ascend to a higher one.

The state of mind directly opposite to this has been designated as *Jahannam*. It is the Arabic form of the Hebrew word *Gehenna*. Originally *Gehenna* meant the valley of Hannom, where human sacrifices to Baal and Moloch were offered.[1] *Jahannam* symbolizes that condition of existence in which the self's purposeful activity is brought to a stand-still. Enfeebled and debilitated by

continuous and persistent wrong-doing, the self loses its capacity for progress and for moving towards a higher state of being. Its urge for progress is crushed and the enervated self surrenders itself to regret and remorse. It has voluntarily relinquished its right to participate in the pursuit of the good. If it ever feels the desire to rejoin the march of free selves, the desire is too weak to pull it out of the slough of despair and inaction. In the words of the poet, Robert Frost, it has:

> Nothing to look backward to with pride and nothing to look forward to with hope.

The Qur'ān asserts:

> Whenever in their anguish they desire to come forth therefrom, they shall be turned back into it (22 : 22).

The inmates of *Jannah* will be spared the sight of this slough of despondence:

> They shall not hear the slightest sound thereof (21 : 102).

They will continue their forward march, steadily rising in the scale of existence and testing the joys of self-fulfilment. The process of their self-development will be continuous and unlimited. When they have attained a high stage, the vision of a still higher one will spur them on to put forth fresh efforts. For them, the reward of victory will not be well-earned rest but a greater zeal for action and a new vista to their ambition.

Such is the picture of heaven and hell that the Qur'ān presents for the edification of man. According to the view upheld by the Qur'ān, salvation is not liberation from "evil"; evil in ourselves or in the world. To achieve salvation is to prove one's fitness for entering on a higher plane of existence. Reward and punishment are wrongly conceived as coming from an external source. They are the natural consequences of what we do and think and manifest themselves in the enrichment or impoverishment of our self. Heaven and Hell do not exist outside us, somewhere in the outer space. They are states of the self. Hell is the state in which the self finds its progress

blocked. Heaven is the state in which the way to development lies open to the self. To cease to aspire is to be doomed to Hell, to be able to aspire is to be in Heaven. There is, therefore, no room for intercession and redemption in Islam. What we become, we become through our own actions. We cannot carry the burden of any other person and no one can relieve us of the burden we bear. The concept of sin also must be reformulated so as to bring it into harmony with the above view. Sin should not be conceived as the taint of evil that clings to the soul from birth, being either the legacy of our forefathers or the result of our own previous life. Sin is the ill effect on our self of our own wrong doing. It can be obliterated by our own right action and not by the action of any one else. If we have committed wrong unwillingly, heedlessly or even with our eyes open, we can draw solace from the reflection that we hold the remedy in our own hands.

Finally we can define "wrong"—*A'mal-us-Sayyiah*—as an act which impoverishes the self, curtails its freedom, jeopardises its independence and weakens its urge for development. To react to it by impotent rage, helpless grief or self mortification serves no purpose. The proper reaction is to make a determined effort to regain our balance and follow the right path with redoubled energy. We would also do well to bear in mind that our final success depends not on our sinlessness but on the preponderance of our right actions over wrong ones. "Sense of sin" is one of the main sources of unhappiness. The healthy attitude to a weakened self inculcated by the Qur'ān is a sure safeguard against unhappiness and infirmity of purpose. It may be added that *Jannah* and *Jahannam* are not held over till after death; they manifest themselves in this life and continue thereafter. The point will be discussed fully in the next chapter.

Reference

1. Arabic Lexicon, *Muḥīṭ-ul-Muḥīṭ*.

Chapter X

SURVIVAL: INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE

I. *Man's Passion for Life*

THE longing for immortality is deep-rooted in man. He clings to life passionately and recoils with horror from the prospect of extinction. He values life above all things and for its preservation and prolongation is willing to pay the highest price even in terms of pain and misery. For centuries, he has been tirelessly seeking the elixir of life which might enable him to prolong his life indefinitely. Frustration only spurred him on to put forth greater efforts. Man's passion for life knows no bounds. He wants to live, no matter what the cost may be. At last man realised, and the realisation was extremely painful to him, that death is inevitable and that his earthly career must, sooner or later, come to an end. He realised the futility of his efforts to evade death, and yet the desire for life burned in him as fiercely as it did in the breast of his remote progenitor. Satan, we are told, exploited Adam's intense longing for immortality and educed him from the path of virtue. He assured Adam that the moment he tasted the forbidden fruit he would become immortal. Adam could not resist the temptation. In the Qur'ān, the story is recounted allegorically in a picturesque style:

> But *Shaiṭān* whispered to him, saying: "O Adam! shall I show thee tree of immortality and power that wasteth not away?" And (Adam and his wife) ate thereof, so that their "shame" became apparent to them and they began to hide by heaping on themselves some of the leaves of the garden. And Adam disobeyed *Rabb* and went astray (20 : 120-21).

Adam typifies *Man* in general, *Shaiṭān* (satan) typifies the forces of debasement and destruction. Tempted by these, man has often sought shortcuts to immortality and has forsaken the path which, though long and wearisome, can alone lead him to the desired end.

Men reacted to the knowledge that death is inevitable in two different ways. A few hard-headed and empirically oriented men, centred all their hopes on this brief earthly life and resolutely refused to look beyond death. Their aim was to make the most of life, to enjoy every moment of it fully, untroubled by the thought of their ultimate fate. Every moment was to be filled with pleasurable experience and the thought that death was round the corner, intensified their joy in life. They lived in the present and refused to turn their thoughts to the future which, they believed, could never be theirs.

For the majority of men, however, the lure of immortality remained as strong as ever. Baulked in their efforts to evade death, they began to speculate on the ways in which life might be possible even after death. Some of them pinned their faith on collective survival—though they might die as individuals, yet they might somehow continue to exist in the lives of their children and children's children. Their earthly career might come to an end but the career of the life they had transmitted to their children might continue indefinitely. This belief offered them a grain of consolation. This is one of the reasons for man's pride in his progeny. The Qur'ān refers to the joy man feels in those he has begotten :

> Beautified for mankind is love of the joys that come from wife and children and stored up heaps of gold and silver and horses of mark and cattle and tilth. That is comfort of the life of this earth, but Allah : with Him is a more excellent abode (3 : 13).

It is obvious that this is not the immortality which is really desired by man. What he wants is not the preservation of a portion of his body but the continuation of his individuality. In collective survival, the "I" has disappeared. The torch of life that a man has transmitted to his children may be carried through generation to

generation for centuries, but the "I" that he prized most and longed to perpetuate, vanished at the moment of his death. Man longs not for collective survival but for the immortality of his individual self. This he cannot claim as his right, nor can he receive it as a gift from a higher being. Only through his personal efforts can man win immortality for his ego. He can conquer death, but only by developing himself to the degree at which he can stand the shock of death. As the Qur'ān says:

> He has created life and death to prove you, which of you is best in conduct (67 : 2).

The verse, cited above, enshrines a great truth. To grasp it fully, we must consider it in all its aspects. Death is a natural phenomenon. It is a physical change which overtakes the human body. The body had its origin in the union of parental life-cells. For a number of years it continued to develop through the processes of maturation and exercise. After reaching its peak, it begins to decline and decay. The process of disintegration culminates in death. The crucial question is whether there is anything in man which survives the dissolution of the body. The answer is that the self which grew and developed in the matrix of the body may survive it and may, on the break-up of the body, launch out on a fresh career. We, by no means, suggest that this is true of all selves. We admit that some philosophers of repute have held the view that the self is by its nature imperishable. McTaggart, to mention only one, has developed this view in his writings and has defended it with arguments that are regarded as worthy of attention in philosophical circles. We do not subscribe to this view because it does not harmonize with the Qur'ānic view of the destiny of the human self. In taking up this attitude to McTaggart's position, we have also been influenced by two rational considerations. Firstly, this view entails belief in the pre-existence of the self, for which there is not a shred of evidence: secondly, with the acceptance of this view, emphasis shifts from what the self *does* to what it *is*. Moral activity ceases to be of vital importance

to the fate of the self. The self, it would seem, is assured of immortality, irrespective of the kind of life, virtuous or vicious, which it led in this world. The Qur'ānic view is that immortality cannot be taken for granted. It is the prize which the self can win by right conduct and by its efforts to realise its potentialities. The self may win the prize or it may lose it. The issue depends on the quality and intensity of its effort and on no other factor. For the self which has lived the right kind of life, death has no terror. The Qur'ān makes this point clear. "The great horror shall not grieve them" (21: 103). The self wins immortality by the proper orientation of will and the performance of right action. This view is not dissimilar to the view of Professor Galloway, as the following passage shows:

> That every creature formed in the semblance of man, however brutish or undeveloped, is destined to immortality, is more than we dare affirm. To do so would require a deeper knowledge of divine economy than we possess. We agree with Lotze, "that every created thing will continue if and so long as its continuance belongs to the meaning of the world: that everything will pass away which had its authorized place only in a transitory phase of the world's course."[1]

Lotze's position is substantially the same as our own. The self which, through the acquisition of absolute values, has vitally related itself to the meaning and purpose of the universe, will find death a transition to a higher place.

II. *Life After Death*

The Qur'ān emphatically asserts that death is not the final end but a gateway to a different kind of life:

> We mete out death among you . . . . that We may transfigure you and make you what you know not. And verily you know the first creation. Why then do you not reflect? (56: 61-63).

The real self, not being a part of the body, is not subject to physical laws. It is dependent on the body for functioning in the physical world, but it may continue to exist after the destruction of the body, its instrument:

> And they say, what! when we have become bones and dust shall we indeed be raised up a new creation. Say thou: Be ye stones or iron or a substance still more improbable in your hearts (to be restored to life). But they will say: Who shall bring us back? Say thou: He Who brought you into being for the first time (17: 49-51).

We interpret this verse as meaning that the self is not the product of physical forces and is not subject to natural laws. It owes its existence to and is directed by the Divine *Amr*. In the Hereafter, as in this life, it is sustained and guided by *Amr*, as it guides the evolutionary process. It may, therefore, be fit or unfit to exist and function on the plane to which it has been carried by evolution.

It is no doubt true that many philosophers and scientists refuse to believe that the self can survive the dissolution of the body. Their argument may be summarised in this way. The identity of the ego depends on memory and memory is a function of the nervous tissue. When the nervous tissue is destroyed, memory ceases to exist and the ego too disappears. We urge that life after death becomes intelligible when it is viewed in relation to the evolutionary progress of the self. The ego takes its origin in and develops dependent on the body. It may, however, attain that stage of development where it can carry on by itself. So too does the imago discard the chrysalis in which it developed and starts on an independent career. It all depends on the degree of development achieved by the ego:

> And what has come to you that you hope not for something (more) weighty from God, when He has developed you by gradual ascents? (71: 13-14)

"Gradual ascents" are the keywords in the above verse. The self does not remain stationary but is meant to rise to higher stages of development. When it reaches a particular stage of development, it would mean that it has related itself to the meaning of the world and the world, therefore, cannot afford to throw it overboard.

III. Will and Action

Will and action are of paramount importance for the development of the self and, therefore, for its survival too. Will and action are really aspects of the same process. Action is "will actualised" and will is latent action. It has been truly said "no will, no action," but the reverse is also true "no action, no will." Only a free self possesses "will" in this sense, and only such a self can perform actions which have relevance to survival. Animals act under the compulsion of instinctive urges and without foresight of the results of their actions. They, therefore, cannot be credited with will as we understand it. In the same way, the activities of the animal are not actions. An action is that which has been deliberately chosen by a free self and has been voluntarily performed by it. The free self expresses itself in action and holds itself responsible for it. Without freedom and responsibility, action, in this restricted sense, is not possible. These facts about "will and action" have a direct bearing on the question of survival. Man is the product of a long evolutionary process. This process does not stop at any point, but continues indefinitely. At a certain stage, man becomes an active participant in it and through his free will and purposeful activity determines, within certain limits, both the speed and the direction of evolutionary process. This process which has been at work in the world for untold aeons is now transformed into something far more rational and meaningful. It also becomes more dependent on its material, i.e., humanity, through which it is working. The primitive organisms were moulded and shaped by natural forces, so as to be fit for the next stage in evolution. It was a long and painful process in which the unfit were ruthlessly weeded out and the fit were permitted to flourish. Man cannot now depend on natural forces to mould him and make him fit for the next stage. He must do the moulding himself. He alone can make himself fit for the higher stage on which he is to enter. His self is not changed by natural forces nor even by random activity. It is changed only by his

moral activity, his freely chosen and voluntarily performed actions. If, through right actions, he has rendered himself fit for the next stage in "the gradual ascent," he enters *Jannah* or paradise, as each plane of existence must appear to someone coming from a lower one. On the other hand, a man who is unfit, feels anguish and misery at the sight of good things he cannot enjoy, of opportunities he cannot avail of, of a glorious life just beyond his reach. He is in Hell. As already stated, Heaven and Hell are not localities but states of mind. However, as a state of mind is transitory, it is not a suitable term. Heaven (*Jannah*) stands for fruition coupled with glowing hope for the future. Hell (*Jahannam*) is the experience of frustration tinged with remorse and regret. The person who permits his self to weaken, stagnates and becomes perverted. He languishes in a state between life and death. He does not live because life consists of upward movement of which he is incapable: he cannot die because remorse and frustrated desire prevent him from relinquishing his hold on life. Both the pleasure of existence and the insensibility of non-existence are denied him. The Qur'ān says about him, "Wherein he neither dies nor lives" (87: 13). All that he can do is to give expression to the remorse that gnaws at his vitals, "Oh! that I had sent something before hand for my life" (89 : 24). The inmates of *Jannah*, on the other hand, will give expression to their happiness in these words: "We shall not die any other than our first death" (37 : 57-58). They have successfully stood the test of death and they know that they will not be subjected to the same test again. Their eyes dwell on new vistas of self-development and the path which leads to them is illumined by the Divine light "running before them and on their right hand" (57: 12). The materialists maintain: "There is no other than life in this world. We live and die and nothing destroys us but time" (45 : 24). The Qur'ān, however, tells us that we can rise much higher above the plane of earth-rootedness and "pass out of the confines of the heavens and earth" (55: 33), provided we develop the powers that are latent in us. These two

views are in direct opposition to each other:

> Do those who commit ill deeds think that We will make them as those who believe and do the right, equal in their life and death! How ill they judge (45 : 21).

The *Mu'min*, who is untiring in the pursuit of the good and keeps his eyes riveted on the eternal verities, is not afraid of death. He welcomes it gladly as he believes that he will pass through the shadow of death to a fuller and richer life. The poet Iqbal says:

> Let me tell you by what sign you may recognize the true *Mu'min*.
> When the grim spectre of Death approaches, he greets it with a smile.
> (Armughān-e-Ḥijāz, p. 165).

It is so because death, for him, is not the end of life but the threshold of a far more glorious life. The *Mu'min* regards death as a test which gives him the opportunity to prove his fitness for the higher life he is about to enter. The Jews claimed that every member of the Jewish race was predestined for paradise. In that case, says the Qur'ān, they should face death with equanimity as they had nothing to fear:

> If the abode of the Hereafter with God be for you, exclusive of the (rest of) mankind, then long for death if you are truthful (2 : 94).

The Qur'ān leaves no doubt on the point that paradise is not reserved for a particular race or community but is open to all who are steadfast in the pursuit of the good as revealed in the Qur'ān, and who lay down their lives for the cause of truth.

IV. Immortality and Eternity

It should be noted, however, that immortality does not imply eternity. Eternity belongs to God alone. It is also beyond our power to formulate a precise definition of immortality. It refers to stages of existence which transcend human calculation. All we can say, and all we need know is that life has no end. When we attain a higher stage, new vistas are opened up for our ambition. It is the nature of life to move forward unceasingly. The self in which the movement is retarded or arrested, suffers

the torments of Hell.*

At this point, we would do well to guard ourselves against a misconception. No doubt, we will reap the harvest of a good life in the Hereafter, but actions which lead to the realisation of higher values are requited in this life as well. The Qur'ān's teaching is not other-worldly alone: it attaches due importance to this world also. Good actions enhance life and confer on us the gift of unalloyed happiness. The full fruition of realised values may be possible only in the Hereafter but we can get a foretaste of the joys of heaven in this life also. Of course, the final success or failure of a life can be known only when that life has run its course. At any stage in life, the next step might be in the right or wrong direction. The balance-sheet of life is possible only when it has ended. Nevertheless, reward is not withheld from the good man during this life. His good deeds bring him peace and happiness. Good action does not benefit the doer alone. Its beneficial effect pervades the world and helps to make it a better place, the home of goodness, beauty and truth. The good man realises himself through serving his fellow-beings. He, therefore, contributes his mite to the creation of a social environment in which truth and justice prevail and in which each individual enjoys the right to express and develop himself in his own way. To create such a social atmosphere has always been the aim of Islam. Some religions are primarily concerned with the salvation of individual men, while others are preoccupied with the stability and efficiency of human society. Islam seeks to create a social milieu in which the human personality may function freely and grow to its full stature. In the next chapter, we will try to assess the value of Islam as a cultural force.

Reference

1. G. Galloway, *The Philosophy of Religion*, pp. 572-73.

* It may be pointed out here that, from the Qur'ānic point of view, there is much difference between "survival after death" and "immortality." While survival is for every human being who has attained self-consciousness, immortality is only for those who have developed their self and have thus qualified themselves for higher planes of life after death.

Chapter XI

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN PERSONALITY

I. The Law of Rubūbiyyah

In the course of ages, the idea slowly dawned on man's mind and gradually crystallised that the world is not merely changing, but is developing towards perfection. The changes are not haphazard; nor erratic. They show a direction. In changing, the world is unfolding its real nature: in the process, what is implicit in it becomes explicit and what is hidden is brought to light. Purpose runs like a golden thread—a binding cord—throughout the universe. The progressive aspect of changes in the world did not escape the notice of some early Greek thinkers. The Greeks were an unusually gifted people and their fertile imagination, unhampered by tradition and custom, explored the realms of mind and matter. Their restless minds were ever shaping new theories and advancing new viewpoints. They anticipated the evolutionary theory, as they anticipated many scientific theories of this age. It is to the credit of modern science that by adducing palpable evidence it has raised what was a nebulous hypothesis, to the plane of a scientific theory, or almost a law of nature. Physics shows a picture of a developing and expanding universe. Biologists describe in minute, ornate detail the evolution of life from the protozoa and protophyta to Homo Sapiens. It is true that biologists, with the exception of Lamarck, reject the concept of purpose as alien to science. It is because purpose does not fit into their conceptual framework of natural science. But for the man who looks at the world with an untainted mind, purpose is a fact of

observation: it is blinkers of science that may prevent us from noticing the purpose. Nevertheless, it is writ large on the face of nature. We understand a thing when we know its end. Nothing around us stays as it is at one particular moment, it is always changing and becoming something different to what it is. As a rule, we are much less interested in a thing as it is than in what it is tending to become. Suppose while taking a walk, we meet a man who is running fast. It is not by determining his exact location at a particular moment that we understand his activity, but by learning about his purpose and the goal he is heading for. The physical world as it develops, is accomplishing a purpose. Although the physical world is not conscious of the purpose, nevertheless it is, in a sense, its purpose which enhances its value and enriches it with new attributes. The purpose is positive, constructive and operates objectively. We may say that the world is destined to move towards and attain the goal which God, in His wisdom, has set for it. This holds for the outer universe. With man the case is quite different. Possessing a free self, he can develop and attain his own end only by free choice and personal effort. Man cannot be forced to develop; he must develop himself. Because man grows, he is compared with a plant in the Qur'ān. The seed germinates and puts forth a young shoot. The tiny stalk grows in bulk and height. It becomes the full-grown tree which bears fruit. It has fulfilled its purpose by reproducing its kind. Man takes his origin in the fertilized ovum. After birth, he grows in size and strength, till he reaches maturity and is ready for procreation. The analogy cannot be carried beyond this point. Man, when he has begotten children, has not fulfilled his purpose. His destiny is far different from that of the plant. He is not a mere instrument for the preservation of his race. His body, no doubt, has fulfilled its purpose when he has begotten children, but he possesses a self and the self does not beget its like. It does not procreate. Says the Qur'ān of the Divine Self that He "neither begetteth nor is He begotten" (112: 3). This is also true of the human self which, though

infinitely lower than the Divine Self, has more in common with it than with physical objects or animals. The self's activity is creative, not procreative. It creates values and the values enrich and expand its nature and raise it in the scale of existence. While the evolution of nature proceeds under the direct control and supervision of God, man is an active participant in his own evolution. Man develops as a result of his own free choice and deliberate voluntary efforts. The evolution of his self, therefore, is governed by laws distinct from those that obtain for nature. He too cannot dispense with Divine help and guidance, but these are offered to him in a form which does not impair the integrity of his self, nor imperil his freedom. He is left free to accept or reject Divine guidance. *Dīn* comprises the principles of conduct which can lead him to his goal, but they would do so only when they are freely adopted and acted upon.

From this vantage point it is clear to us that development is the rule in the world. In the language of the Qur'ān it is the Law of *Rubūbiyyah*. This Law states that God carries forward the universe and everything in it from one stage to a higher one. God keeps everything moving forward, actualising its latent capabilities. It is a dynamic universe and the most dynamic being in it is man. In such a universe, there will obviously be different stages of existence. The Law of *Rubūbiyyah* is tuned to each stage of existence but its purpose and aim remain unaffected throughout. The Law is the sheet-anchor of the universe, the guarantee that everything in it will develop to the full extent of its capacity: the only possible exception is man who, through his own volition, may set himself against it and misapply his freedom by choosing to descend instead of ascending, to creep on earth instead of soaring in the sky (7 : 176).

II. Course of Self-development

The evolutionary process, in evidence in the outer world, takes within man the form of self-development.

What are the conditions under which self-development proceeds smoothly without let or hindrance? Some conditions are common for each stage of development in general, others apply only to self-development—the most exciting form of development. Let us consider the common ones first. Nothing exists by itself in isolation. Everything is related to many other things and the relationship between them is not merely of co-existence, but of co-operation. The development, therefore, depends on the presence and co-operation of several factors. To take a concrete example, a seed is capable of growing into a tree. However, for its growth it depends on soil, water, minerals, air and sunlight. All these must not only be present, but they must also bear proper relations to each other and to the seed. If the seed is placed in one pot, soil in another and water in a third pot, nothing will happen. But if the seed is related to these things in such a way that they interact on each other, the seed will soon sprout and burgeon. The human body too develops through intimate interaction with environmental forces and objects. All things in the world are interdependent; they need each other and help each other. This is still more true of the self of man. The self can develop only in a social environment, through interaction with other free selves. It needs a society in which there is internal harmony and concord. It burgeons in the context of friendly relations with kindred beings. Their sympathy and co-operation are essential to its growth. The sense of participation in social activities directed to a noble end adds a new dimension to the self. Self-realisation is possible for man only in society, a society which is based on justice and respect for human personality, a society which is dedicated to the acquisition of higher values. The society which favours the growth of the self, is that in which every man gladly helps others and gratefully receives help from them. In a society torn by dissension, the demands of the physical self become imperative. In such a society, every man will be thinking of himself and his personal interests. His mind will be engrossed with the problem of protecting his life, property

and children from other men. Biological motives will dominate the mind and the urge for a higher life will be relegated to the background. In a society of this kind the pursuit of the good is not possible. Man needs a society in which all the members are bound to each other by ties of friendship and animated by the spirit of comradeship. Belief in these values is the first commitment of belief in God. The Qur'ān exhorts man to build up a society in which men are united by such an *Īmān* in God for the purpose of collating a society which is not wrought-up by internal tensions:

> And hold fast by the cord of God, all of you, and be not divided; but remember the favour of God towards you, when you were enemies and He united your hearts so that you became, by His favour, as brothers (3 : 102).

The society so cultivated and congenial is the *Ummah* of the Qur'ān. "This is how He has raised an *Ummah*—community—from among you" (2 : 143). This is the reason for the Qur'ān's emphasis on corporate life and for its disapproval of monasticism. Goethe once remarked that character is formed not in solitude, but in the hurly-burly of life. The self shrinks and contracts in solitude, while it grows and expands through active and continuous participation in group activities.

A harmonious, well-knit and integrated personality can take shape only in a balanced and concordant society. The human mind is the arena of conflicting desires. Society too carries the seed of discord as it is composed of individuals with different and often opposed tastes, interests and aims. In society the resulting conflicts should not be resolved by suppressing one party and giving free rein to the other. The true solution lies in mutual adjustment, in reconciling one to the other and in discovering an activity or a way of life which affords reasonable satisfaction to rivals. Balance and proportion should characterise personality as well as society. How can human personality acquire proportion? The answer is that it can do so only by taking as its model the Divine Attributes, *Asmā-ul-Ḥusnā* (Beautiful Names).

The Divine Attributes, severally, represent the highest degree of each intrinsically valuable quality and they collectively reflect proportion of the highest order. If we bear in mind that proportion is an essential condition of beauty, and some might go so far as to say that proportion itself is beauty, it will be clear to us why the term *Ḥusnā* is applied to these attributes. These are beautiful because each bears the right proportion to others, so as to form a well-balanced whole. *Ḥusn*, however, must be taken in a wider sense. It denotes not only physical beauty but moral beauty as well. Proportion is the only antidote to the poison of discord and conflict in the self as well as in society.

There is at least one marked distinction in the way of development of the self from that of the body. The body grows by taking and assimilating nutrient substances from the environment. The more nourishment it gets, the better is its growth. Paradoxically, the self grows not by *receiving* but by *giving*. Generosity promotes its growth and meanness checks it. The more the self gives of its riches, the richer it grows. If this basic truth is clearly perceived, men will rush to the help of those in need. Pride in possession will give place to joy in munificence. They will think more of what they can give than of what they can keep for themselves. The acquisitive instinct will be weakened and the impulse to give will gain strength. The Qur'ān extols men who put the interests of others above their own :

> They prefer others before themselves, although there be indigence among them ; and whosoever is preserved from the covetousness of his own soul, these shall prosper (59 : 9).

The tendency directly opposed to generosity that we have been considering is covetousness, termed *shuḥ-un-nafs* in the Qur'ān (59 : 9). It is acquisitive, possessive and egoistic. The covetous man wants to appropriate all the good things within his reach and is callously indifferent to the needs of others. Suppose a number of men are gathered at a water tap. They know that the flow of water will cease in an hour or so. Each is eager to fill

his pitcher. The covetous man elbows his way through the crowd, rudely pushes the pitcher of another from underneath the tap and places his own in its place. He does not care if others have to go without water. All he cares for is to have a plentiful supply of water for himself. Covetousness deadens the human self and the Qur'ān admonishes us to be on our guard against this insidious disease of the self. It exhorts us to help all men, and not only our kith and kin. The Qur'ān is objective and universal in its outlook. It seeks the welfare of all humanity and not only of a particular sect or community. According to the Qur'ān, only that endures which benefits "man," whoever he may be and to whatever country, nation or group he may belong. We would do well to reflect on the verse quoted below :

> He sends down water from heaven, and the brooks flow according to their (respective) measure, and the flood bears along a swelling foam. And from the metals which they smelt in fire seeking to cast ornaments and necessaries, arises a scum like it. Thus Allah coineth the similitude of the true and the false. As to the foam, it goes off as refuse, and as to what is profitable to mankind, it remains on the earth. Thus God strikes out parables (13 : 17).

The proposition, "Only that survives which is for the benefit of all mankind," together with its corollary, "only those survive who benefit all mankind," are the fundamental principles of self-development. The law is not "the survival of the fittest," but "the survival of the most munificent." In other words, according to the standard laid down by the Qur'ān, only the most munificent is the fittest to survive. Those who have imbibed the true spirit of the Qur'ān, will eschew selfishness and will dedicate themselves to the service of humanity. They are the real Muslims.

Nationalism and colonialism have been dominant forces in the West during the last two or three centuries. Both generate narrowmindedness and a parochial attitude. The European thought only of his own nation or empire. Even in the West, however, some thinkers have exhorted their compatriots to work for the good of all mankind. We quote an eloquent passage from Rashdall's

book on ethics:

> It may be urged that the ideal is that I should be producing something for another and find my good in doing so; while he is working in turn for my good, and finds his good in doing so.[1]

An eloquent defence of this view is to be found in Robert Briffault's *Making of Humanity*:

> The peculiar means and conditions of human development necessitate that development shall take place not by way of individuals, but by way of the entire human race; that the grade of development of each individual is the resultant of that oecumenical development (p. 260).

He says further:

> The making of humanity! That is the burden of man's evolution; and that is the solid, nay, somewhat hard fact, of which the 'moral law' is the vaguely conscious expression. It is not throbbing impulse of altruism, no inspiration of generosity for its own sake, but a heavy weight of necessity laid upon man's development by the unbending conditions that govern it (p. 261).

On another place, he has elaborated the point:

> In the natural scale, that action is good which contributes to the process of human development, that act is evil which tends to impede, retard, oppose that process: that individual life is well deserving which is in the direct line of that evolution, that is futile which lies outside the course of its advance; that is condemned which endeavours to oppose the current. That is the natural, the absolute and actual standard of moral values. Nature does not value the most saintly and charitable life which brings no contribution to human growth, as much as a single act which permanently promotes the evolution of the race. . . . . The only measure of worth of which nature takes any account—by perpetuating it—is the contribution offered towards the building up of a higher humanity (p. 352).

The real interests of the individual are not detached from but are interwoven with those of mankind. They are not antithetical to but are identical with each other. Man, therefore, realises himself by furthering the interest of mankind. This is the truth which the Qur'ān proclaims. It regards all "mankind as one community" (10 : 19). It does not recognize the distinctions of caste, race, creed or colour. Mankind is one whole, a single, though complex, entity for it:

Your creation and your raising are but as those of single self (31 : 28).

The Qur'ān speaks of *Ka'bah*, the centre of the Muslim world, as "an establishment for the entire mankind" (5 : 97). It holds that the well-being of the individual depends on the well-being of the society. Muslims are enjoined to work not for the well-being of the Muslim community but for that of all mankind. The Qur'ān leaves no doubt on this point, and Prof. Whitehead is in full agreement with it when he says that:

The perfection of life resides in aims beyond the individual person in question.[2]

Mason says:

Man, in his individual capacity, self-develops his personality as he satisfies his desires, and his self-conscious interpretations of his subconscious knowledge of his origin in Pure Spirit may influence his activities. But, racially, man ought to engage only in such activities as tend to extend creative freedom to the utmost through the self-creativeness of all personalities to their uttermost limits. Man may turn from this second movement while holding to the first. Man, therefore, may be moral individually and immoral racially. The highest personalities unite the two moralities.[3]

The interdependence of man is the recurring theme of the Qur'ān. The Qur'ānic programme for man has a twofold aim—the furtherance of the best interests of the individual as well as of the society. In working for the good of mankind, man achieves his own good as well. This view has been held by some great thinkers in the West also. We quote from Kant:

Act in such a way as to treat thyself and every other human being as of equal intrinsic value; behave as a member of a society in which each regards the good of the other as of equal value with his own, and is so treated by the rest, in which each is both end and means, in which each realises his own good in promoting that of others.[4]

The Qur'ān goes a step further and declares that "the believers prefer others to themselves although there is indigence among them" (59 : 9). Julian Huxley, a great scientist who holds no brief for religion, writes to the same effect:

I believe that the whole duty of man can be summed up in the words: more life for your neighbour as for yourself. And I believe that man, though not without perplexity, effort and pain, can fulfil this duty and gradually achieve his destiny. A religion which takes this as its central core and interprets it with wide vision, both of the possibilities open to man and of the limitations in which he is confined will be a true religion, because it is conterminous with life; it will encourage the growth of life, and will itself grow with that growth. I believe in the religion of life.[5]

Julian Huxley, of course, does not believe that man needs the help of Divine Revelation. He holds fast to the view that reason alone can enable man to grasp the true relationship between himself and mankind. Here, he is oversimplifying the problem. He fails to see that mere intellectual apprehension of a truth is not enough, that it does not guarantee that we will always follow the hard path he has suggested. Reason may lead us to the lofty peak which gives a wider vision of life, but Revelation gives us the strength to stay there and order our life in accordance with that vision. Ovid's famous line is pertinent to the point, "Video metiora prohoque deteriora sequor!" (I see the better course but follow the worse one!). Reason can point out the right path but it lacks the power to compel us to follow it. Revelation supplements reason. It confirms and expands the vision granted by reason and also sustains and guides us in the arduous journey to our goal. Revelation summons men to a fuller and richer life and is meant only for those "who are living" (36 : 70).

Life, we should bear in mind, is much more than physical existence. It is a steady and continuous progress towards a higher stage in social, moral and intellectual development. Man approaches this stage by helping his fellow-beings to do the same. If man pushes society forward, society in turn pushes him on, and so both rise to the desired higher level. Says the Qur'ān:

O ye who believe! Respond to God and His apostle, when he calls you to that which gives you life (8 : 24).

To sum up, man is organically related to all mankind.

His vital interests are bound up with the interest of humanity. He can fulfil himself only by serving other men and by putting their interest above his own. He realises his good only by working for the general good. The Qur'ān puts it clearly:

> (The believers say): We feed you for the sake of Allah only. We wish for no reward or thanks from you (76 : 9).

Man is really benefiting himself by serving other men. So the question of reward does not arise. As the Qur'ān says:

> Is the reward of *Iḥsān* aught save *Iḥsān*? (55 : 60).

Dedicated to the service of mankind, the believers keep the doors of the *Rubūbiyyah* Order open to all. They sincerely rejoice at the progress of others:

> Those who spend their wealth in accordance with the Laws of Allah (for the benefit of mankind) and afterwards make not reproach and injury to follow that which they have spent: their reward is with their *Rabb* and there shall no fear come upon them neither shall they grieve (2 : 262).

They are happy in serving others, seeking neither wealth nor fame:

> O ye who believe! Render not vain what you spend for the cause prescribed by Allah by reproach and injury, like him who spends his wealth only to be seen of men and believe not in Allah and the last day (2 : 264).

So the *Rasūl*, whose mission it was to summon men to the *Rubūbiyyah* Order, declared:

> And I ask of you no reward for it; my reward is only with the *Rabb* of all the worlds (26 : 109).

We must now face the crucial question, whether it is really possible for man to sacrifice his interests for the sake of the general good. No doubt, man is endowed with altruistic as well as egoistic impulses. But the egoistic impulse which impels man to appropriate all good things for himself, is far more powerful than the social impulse. Moreover, worldly wisdom too lends its support to the egoistic impulse. Few can resist the powerful appeal of

immediate personal gain. Mysticism seeks to strengthen the altruistic motive by inculcating into man ideas such as that the body is utterly worthless, that all sensual pleasures are sinful and that the world is shot through with evil. It is believed that if man is fully convinced that the body is an obstacle to his "spiritual" progress, he would cease to care for things that minister to its needs. The Qur'ān, however, does not approve of this kind of other-worldliness. It treats the body and the world with the respect due to them. It tells us that there is nothing sinful in possessing worldly goods and in gratifying bodily needs. It fully recognizes the fact that it is possible to have value experience through the body:

> Beautiful for mankind is love of the joys (that come) from women and children, and stored up treasures of gold and silver, and horses branded (with their mark) and cattle and land. That is comfort of the life of the world. Allah! with Him is a more excellent abode (3: 13).

The Qur'ān encourages man to enjoy the good things of the world:

> Say: Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah which He hath brought forth for His servants, and the good things of His providing? (7: 32).

Mysticism pleads for the suppression of the egoistic impulse which would leave the field open to the altruistic impulse. The Qur'ān is opposed to this view and asks us to do justice to the physical self as well as the real self. How can the interests of these two selves be reconciled and how can man have the best of both the worlds? This question is discussed in the next chapter.

References

1. H. Rashdall, *The Theory of Good And Evil*, Vol. II, p. 77.
2. A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas*, p. 373.
3. J. W. T. Mason, *Creative Freedom*, p. 226.
4. Quoted by Rashdall, op. cit, Vol. I, p. 133.
5. Julian Huxley, *Religion without Revelation*, p. 113.

Chapter XII

THE RUBŪBIYYAH ORDER

(QUR'ĀNIC ECONOMICS)

I. *The Order of Rubūbiyyah—Its Nature and Purpose*

In the animal world, evolution proceeds through the operation of natural causes. It aims at the perfection of the species and the eventual production of a better one. The individual does not count; the race is all-important. There is no hesitation to expend individual for the good of the species. This is the animal stage. At the human level, however, the focus of interest shifts from the race to the individual. There is the emergence of individuality, and, with it, the evolutionary process enters a new phase —a strikingly different one. Natural forces which had so far directed the course of evolution now recede into the background and rational beings consciously and actively participate in the evolutionary process. There is a corresponding change in the goal of evolution which is now, not the production of a species well adjusted to its environment, but the development of a free and autonomous self capable of directing its ascent to higher levels of life. Nature leads the animal in the right direction. Man has to discover the right path and follow it with his own resources. He relies mainly on reason. He soon finds out, however, that in voyaging across the uncharted seas of existence, he cannot depend solely on the fitful flickering light of reason. In desperation, he turns to God for help which is granted him in the form of a summons to join the Order of the *Rubūbiyyah*. This order would, naturally, make sense for those who have the earnest

desire and ambition to follow the right path. Those who join the order are assured of speedy and smooth progress towards the goal of self-fulfilment. This is what *Jannah* stands for in the terminology of the Qur'ān. Man will march towards the goal in the company of like-minded persons.

The Qur'ān sets forth a sustaining practical programme for this inviting enterprise. The programme is essentially social and intended for the group the members of which are not competing but whole-heartedly co-operating with one another. The Qur'ān calls upon man to join such a co-operative group organised on the basis of justice and for the purpose of achieving a lofty ideal. Only as a member of this group, can man carry out the programme of the *Rubūbiyyah* and thereby work out his destiny. Individual man possesses immense potentialities, but these can be actualised only in a favourable social milieu and through co-operation with congenial companions. Membership of a group held together by mutual sympathy and understanding, and inspired by a high ideal is the guarantee of self-development. The *Rubūbiyyah* Order provides such a group and summons man to join it by giving up all narrow personal ends and dedicating himself to the common goal. In such a group, man can realise himself by serving others and gladly availing himself of their help. Human personality shrinks and contracts through preoccupation with its own interests. It expands and blossoms by subordinating its interests to the broader interests of mankind. The practical programme of the *Rubūbiyyah* Order can be implemented only by a group and by the individual as a member of the group. Fulfilment of personality is possible only in a group, for an isolated man has no opportunity for self-sacrifice and for serving others. The sweep for his activities is too short to influence self-development. Membership of a group is only conducive to this, but not all groups provide this opportunity. Only that one offers the right environment which places no curb on the independence of its members, nor menaces in any way their freedom of thought and action. This individual privilege

is secured, to start with, by throwing the membership open to a voluntary act. The individual makes a contract with the group, taking upon himself defined obligations in return for defined rights. The result of this social contract is the state, generally known to the Muslims as *Khilāfat*. *Khilāfat* or state is the political and executive organ of the *Ummah*, the frame-work for the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*. The *Ummah*, through the agency of the *Khilāfat*, launches the Divine programme and provides every member with propitious opportunity for self-expression and self-development. Man, according to the Qur'ān, is expected to enter into a contract with God. He is invited to place his life and his possessions at His disposal in return for *Jannah*—the state of perfect self-fulfilment. In the words of the Qur'ān:

> Lo! God hath bought from the believers their lives and their wealth for *Jannah* (9 : 111).

Like any mundane contract, this covenant comprises:

1. The buyer—God.
2. The seller—the Believer.
3. The goods sold—The life and possessions of the believer.
4. The price—*Jannah*.

Of these, the goods is a concrete tangible and identifiable commodity and the seller is a living being. The other two, God and *Jannah*, are abstract and intangible. How can a bargain be struck with the buyer and the price missing, or, at best, remaining in imagination. "Selling one's life to Allah" is an empty phrase, a deluding mirage. The contract would be meaningful only when it is realised that God and *Jannah* are as real—nay more real—than man and life. This can be done only by bringing God and *Jannah* into intimate and vital relationship with living human experience. This is exactly what the Qur'ān does.

II. Jannah

Misled by the figurative language in which *Jannah* is described in the Qur'ān, many people have localised it in

space and have conceived of it as a glorified earthly garden. Others, dissatisfied with this shabby view, have sedulously searched for the hidden meaning of the relevant verses. It seems to us that both are guilty of not paying attention to certain delicate hints in the Qur'ān which provide the clue for the correct interpretation. We will first briefly state the view to which we are led by a close study of the verses and then we will cite the corroboratory evidence provided by the Qur'ān itself. We have seen that the Qur'ān envisages the human self as a developing entity. When the self has successfully completed the journey of life, death opens the door to the prospect of fresh and more glorious possibilities. Joy at the accomplishment of a worthy task is blended with elation at the prospect of fresh opportunities. Having realised a certain quantum of potentialities during its earthly career, the self becomes aware of what is still left to be actualised. This state of mind, a blend of joy and zest for action, is *Jannah* rightly conceived. The term bliss or beatitude may appropriately be applied to this frame of mind. However, man can have, at best, a very imperfect idea of this state of existence. It is radically different from the experience of this life, and it cannot be described in words since they can connote only the latter. It is imperative, however, to have some notion of the bliss that awaits a developed self of a man when he dies. This can be done only through symbols. The higher plane of existence cannot be described, but it can be symbolised. That is why the Qur'ān has recourse to metaphorical language in regard to *Jannah*:

> A similitude of the *Jannah* which is promised unto those who keep their duty to Allah: underneath it streams flow; its fruit is everlasting and its shade (13 : 35 ; 47 : 15).

"Similitude" is the key-word in the above verse. It is significant and highly suggestive. We are clearly warned against insisting on the literal meaning of the words in which the pleasures and comforts of *Jannah* are described. We must heed the admonition that they are merely metaphors which hint at but do not convey an exact idea of the state of consciousness which is termed *Jannah*.

In fact, *Jannah* cannot be described: it can only be symbolised. The higher plane of existence can neither be visualised nor imagined by the denizens of the lower plane. The Qur'ān is explicit on this point, as the following verse shows:

No one knows what joy of the eye is reserved for them as a reward for what they do (32 : 17).

Another verse of the Qur'ān guides us to the true conception of *Jannah*. We are told that *Jannah* is not to be regarded as a strictly circumscribed region but as coterminous with existence, provided existence is in unison with the Divine :

The *Jannah* is as wide as are the heavens and the earth (3 : 132 ; 57 : 21).

Being a state of mind, *Jannah* is not unapproachable and inaccessible to men on earth. The good man, living in harmony with the Will of God (i.e., His Laws), has foretaste of *Jannah*. The Qur'ān speaks of life lived in accordance with its teaching as "heavenly." We catch glimpses of *Jannah* in this life and this fact makes *Jannah* real to us. *Jannah* is tied to our present experience and, therefore, it is not a mere figment of imagination.

The question is often asked: Why in the Qur'ān *Jannah* is depicted in sensuous terms ? It is not difficult to answer it if we bear in mind two important facts. In the first place, a state of existence so dissimilar to our present one can only be suggested with the help of objects and experiences familiar to us. Of these, only those are selected which bear some, even though very slight, resemblance to the accompaniments of the higher plane. Terms borrowed from our present experience are employed to suggest, but only to suggest, the other plane.

The second consideration, to be borne in mind, is that the Qur'ān (though meant for the whole of mankind) was initially addressed to a people who were conditioned by historical and geographical factors to value certain things and comforts very highly. The Arabs had little liking

for abstract thinking and metaphysical speculation. Perceptible objects alone were real to them. They had no tendency to deify abstract ideas. They paid heed only to that which appealed to their senses. Secondly, they lived in a barren country. All around them was the wide expanse of the arid desert—life was hard, comforts very few. Above all things, they valued cool springs, green shady trees laden with fruit, running streams and milk and honey. By means of these familiar and concrete objects, the Qur'ān strives to evoke a sense of the richness of existence at the higher plane. While making use of sensuous terms, the Qur'ān never misses an opportunity of putting people on their guard by hinting that the words are not to be taken in the literal sense. It tells them that they will not only get the garden they want but also something much more desirable. When the heathen asked the *Rasūl* to call upon God to send down a garden for him, the Qur'ān replied, "Blessed is He, Who, if He will, will assign thee better than all that —gardens underneath which streams flow—and assign thee palaces" (25 : 8-10).

Moreover, the Arabs were a poor people and were surrounded by rich nations. They naturally cast envious glances at the wealth and luxury of their more fortunate neighbours. The Qur'ān assured them that if they were good, they would get all these things and even more. It is obvious that the Qur'ān is humouring crude simple men so that they may be induced to turn to the right path. They were impervious to any other kind of appeal. Incidentally, we also note that the Qur'ān sees no harm in the enjoyment of the good things of this world. It does not encourage men to despise the good things, nor does it approve of asceticism and self-abnegation:

> And Allah has promised such of you as believe and act according to His programme that He will surely give them power in the land even as He gave power to those who were before them; and that He will surely establish for them their *Dīn*, which He has approved for them and will surely change for them their fear into security (24 : 55).

The above verse raises the question of the rise and fall

of nations. A nation suddenly rises to a position of power and glory and then, after a short or long period, falls into decay and is supplanted by another more vigorous nation. Here too we see the working of an unalterable law, the law of survival of nations. This is basically a moral law. As long as a nation, by its achievements in the fields of knowledge and action, helps forward the progress of humanity, it continues to flourish and prosper. The moment its activities impede the development of mankind, it is doomed to decay and extinction. We see this law operative throughout human history. The lives of all nations are governed by this law. The fate of nations depends on moral value and not on the possession of brute force. Note what the Qur'ān says about this:

> We (thus) caused you to inherit their land and their houses and their wealth, and land ye have not yet trodden (33 : 27).

That nation inherits the earth which has, of its own accord, joined the Order of *Rubūbiyyah* and has implemented its programme by fostering and developing the absolute values and creating the proper atmosphere for the development of free selves. Such a nation, on entering upon its inheritance, exclaims, in the words of the Qur'ān:

> Thanks to God Who has fulfilled His promise to us and has made us to inherit the land. . . . . We may dwell in *Jannah* wherever we please. So bounteous is the reward of those who work (39 : 74).

This verse reveals the true nature of *Jannah* and stresses the continuity between this life and the Hereafter. It is clear that *Jannah* is a state of existence and although the good enter on it only after death, they can, when their life is attuned to the Divine Will, enjoy a foretaste of it even in this life. The fact that it can be anticipated in this life shows that it is not to be regarded as a locality. The characteristic of this plane of existence is that the basic needs of the physical self are provided for, so that the real self is free to develop and seek fulfilment. The following verse, addressed to Adam refers to this point:

It is (vouchsafed) unto thee that thou shalt not hunger therein, (in *Jannah*), nor shalt thou be naked ; and thou shalt not thirst therein nor be exposed to the sun's heat (20 : 118-119).

Above all things, the body needs food, clothes and shelter. When these are provided the mind can pursue higher goals. However, it is not only these things that will be provided but also others which, though not necessary, yet add to the charm of life and, therefore, are desired :

They shall be adorned therein with bracelets of gold and pearls, and their garments therein shall be silk (22 : 23). Dishes of gold and bowls shall be carried round to them (43 : 71). Also fruits in abundance (43 : 73). Upon them shall be robes of fine green silk and of brocade (76 : 21). And flesh of fowls that they desire (56 : 21).

No doubt, the language is metaphorical but precisely because it is metaphorical it serves a dual purpose. With reference to this life, the words used above denote concrete material objects which are desirable and were passionately desired by the Arabs. With reference to the Hereafter, the same words symbolise the joys of a higher level of existence. It should be noted that the Arabs, by following the teaching of the Qur'ān, actually acquired an abundance of all the objects promised in this life, as well as in the next. They are exhorted to enjoy the good things in this world while feeling grateful to God. Enjoyment of life is not an obstacle to the attainment of the higher purpose before man, if he is not immersed in pleasure and his self remains free and detached. The early Muslims fulfilled this condition and their selves remained free in the midst of the wealth that conquest brought to them. Within a few years, the Arabs found themselves in possession of jewelled bangles, utensils of gold and silver, silken robes, cushioned divans, cups of exquisite beauty, the fertile fields and fruit gardens of Syria, Iraq and Egypt, rivers and hill-sides covered with forest. No wonder if they felt that paradise had come down to earth : but the joys of this life only whetted their desire for the ineffable joy of the *Jannah* that awaited them. In the midst of these luxuries they

enjoyed that peace of mind which no emperor or conqueror had experienced. It was because the enjoyment of all these good things did not deflect them from the path of self-development and because the interests of the real self continued to be of paramount importance to them, that wealth made them not proud and arrogant but humble and grateful to God :

> And they shall say : Thanks to Allah Who hath put grief away from us (35 : 34).

They had a foretaste of the peace that reigns in *Jannah* :

> Therein shall they hear no vain talk, but only peace (19 : 62).

Feelings of ill-will and rancour cannot enter a mind wherein love and peace hold sway :

> And we will remove whatever rancour may be in their breasts. Face to face (they rest) on couches raised (15 : 47).

They taste the joy of disinterested companionship and are members of a society which pursues the good and the beautiful with a single-minded devotion. The earthly career is but the prelude to the real development of the self of man. The joy of self-fulfilment is symbolised by a heavenly beverage :

> Verily, the righteous shall drink of a cup mixed with (the water of) *Kafūr*, a fountain whereof the servants of God shall drink and make it gush forth abundantly (76 : 5-6).

A member of such a society makes steady progress in self-realisation. If he fails to keep pace with his comrades, the responsibility lies on his own shoulders. The Qur'ān says :

> This is a warning to men. To him of you who desires to advance or lag behind. Every self lies in pledge for its own deeds (74 : 36-38).

The path of those who move forward, is illumined by the "light of their forehead," moving along with them. They are thankful for the light and desire more of it. "Our *Rabb* ! make perfect for us our light" (66 : 8). They continue to climb higher and higher in the scale of being. Their progress is hampered by nothing, as the Qur'ān states clearly :

For those who keep their duty to their *Rabb*, for them are higher apartments over which are (other) high apartments built, streams running beneath them (39 : 20).

This is the *Jannah* which the Order of *Rubūbiyyah* assures to those who "sell their life and what they possess for the cause of Allah."

Jannah, therefore, is not a mere abstract idea. The believers feel it to be real and eminently desirable. They can form an idea of it on the basis of the foretaste of it during this life. It is thus interlocked with living experience.

III. Allah

We have seen that the covenant described in an earlier section, is between God and man. Man surrenders to God his life and possessions, and God in return awards *Jannah* to him. How could this exchange take place? Where to contact God? How can life and possessions be handed over to Him? On the question of contact with God, the answer is simple. God is in fact in communication with us when we recite and understand what He has revealed in the Qur'ān. That is how we come into contact with Him.

As regards the question of delivering the goods, a satisfactory answer can be given only in the context of the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*. This order is designed to help man to develop all his potentialities and build up such a wholesome and integrated personality that it can withstand the shock of death and survive physical dissolution. Man can achieve this end not in seclusion but in a society of like-minded persons and through mutual help and co-operation. Such a society is the embodiment of the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*. It is organised on a contractual basis and its membership is open to all who care to enter it and associate themselves with its aims and ideals. Only a bold ideal nursed with conviction gives meaning to life. In the absence of an ideal, human life becomes impoverished, humdrum, desultory and meaning-

less. The more lofty the ideal, the more excelsior is the life. So, when man shares the high ideal of his society, and the society is animated by the spirit of the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*, his personality is enriched and its progress stimulated. In this accelerated development, he recognises such an advantage that he is motivated to keep up the Order—the vehicle of his progress—at any cost, even, if need be, at the cost of his life and all that he possesses. It is then that the bargain is struck and covenant fully implemented. Muḥammad (P), the bearer of the last Revelation, was the head of the society embodying the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*. The men who put their lives and possessions at his disposal were really selling these to God, in the terms of the Qur'ān :

> Surely those who swear allegiance to you do but swear allegiance to Allah ; the hand of Allah is above their hands (48 : 10).

It is the society which gives concrete expression to the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*, and the head of that society is, so to say, the "representative" of God in the sense that he takes upon himself the stupendous task of discharging the responsibilities which belonged to God in respect of His creation, for example, providing them with means of subsistence and of enforcing His Laws in the land. They are thus authorised to make such a contract with others. The reason is not difficult to discern : the leader of such a society can only be one who has surrendered himself to God and has identified his will completely with the Divine Will. Obviously, the verse which commands men to "spend in the name of Allah" and "lend unto Allah" can only mean that the "price of *Jannah*" is to be paid to the central authority of the *Rubūbiyyah* society. The society will naturally utilise the resources placed at its disposal for the enhancement and enrichment of human life and personality.

The Order of *Rubūbiyyah* initiates a new process of evolution—moral evolution. No man who values the possibilities opened out to him can remain indifferent to this process of evolution. He will be only too willing to sacrifice all he possesses for the sake of the perfection he

can attain. Those who join the *Rububiyyah* Order and dedicate themselves to the pursuit of self-realisation regard no price too high for its attainment. They desire only the good, whether in this life or in the Hereafter. Rightly do they pray :

> Our *Rabb* ! give us good in this world and good in the Hereafter (2 : 201).

IV. The Problem of Subsistence

The real self may eventually become capable of subsisting by itself, but during its earthly career it is more or less completely dependent on the body. Bodily needs, therefore, have a prior claim on man. The body can survive only if the satisfaction of its basic needs is not delayed too long. Hunger is the most powerful of these biological drives. A hungry man has no eyes for anything but that which promises to appease his hunger. Only when he has a plentiful supply of food, does man turn his mind to higher interests such as art, science and religion. Before engaging in the pursuit of the good, man demands an assurance that he and his children will not starve for want of food. The Qur'ān gives this assurance :

> We will provide for you and your children (6 : 152).

The Order of *Rubūbiyyah*, therefore, holds itself responsible for providing its members with the means of sustenance. The serving of man's physical needs, though not an end in itself, is the grim reality to be faced. Once this requirement is met, the mind is free to indulge in higher pursuits. The ideal of self-realisation can appeal only to him whose mind is not assailed with pangs of hunger. Man, therefore, desires economic security first of all. But man does not want only to live ; he wants to live well. As soon as the problems of physical survival are off his mind, he turns to matters that enrich and uplift life. This takes him from the individual to the collective survival. He tries to visualise the kind of social order that ought to be, and the enduring values which

can perpetuate it. That is why before covering the higher issues, the Qur'ānic society regards it as its first obligation to ensure for all its members the means of supporting life. Only when this responsibility has reasonably been discharged, the society summons its members to embark on the enterprise of self-development. However, the *Rubūbiyyah* society cannot exist in isolation. It cannot confine *Rubūbiyyah* to its own members. Such a narrow outlook would impede their progress. Its outlook has to embrace the whole of mankind. It has to interest itself in *man*, wherever he may be and whatever allegiances he may hold. It believes that each man is unique and has his own contribution to make. It has, therefore, to cater for a congenial atmosphere for all mankind so that no talent is lost. It has to pursue the goal of economic security for all men. It devotes itself to the enrichment and development of *life* and it will not be true to itself if it cares only for its own members. Its programme must reflect the Divine Attribute of the "*Rabb* of all mankind" (114 : 1).

> And there is no *Daābbah* (moving thing) on earth but its provision is with Allah (11 : 6).

The word "*Daābbah*" (in the verse quoted above and meaning "a moving thing") is applied to both man and animal. The Order of *Rubūbiyyah* holds itself responsible for providing for the needs of all living beings because it is the chief agency for the establishment of *dīn*, or, in other words, "kingdom of heaven" on earth for the development and expansion of life and beautification of the universe in which we live.

This brings us to a question round which heated controversy has raged for more than a century. If society makes ample provision for the needs of its members, will not they be left with no incentive to work? Will not they become both lazy and selfish? They will become lazy because they can live in comfort without having to do a stroke of work. They will become selfish too, because being content to enjoy the comforts provided for them, they will hardly give a thought to those who

are less fortunate than themselves. The members of such a society will, therefore, be up physically but down morally. Those who defend the Capitalistic system argue that a Communistic society cannot but deprive man of the chief incentive to work. Man finds work irksome and, left to himself, he would rather play than work. He works because he wants more comforts and luxuries, or more wealth and power. In an egalitarian society in which the individual gets only what he needs, whether he works or not, production will necessarily fall and less and less will be available for distribution. Despite equitable distribution of wealth such a society will collapse sooner or later. In a Capitalistic society, on the other hand, there is full scope for private enterprise and individual initiative. Everyone works because he knows that he will enjoy the fruits of his labour. National wealth increases and the people are hardworking and prosperous. This is, generally, what the protagonists of Capitalistic system say.

Capitalism, however, fails to look at the other side of the picture. While making the rich richer, it has often driven the poor to the verge of starvation. The "prophets" of this system declared this in unequivocal words. Defoe argued, in his pamphlet entitled *Giving alms no charity and employing the poor a grievance to the nation*, that :

> If the poor were relieved they would remain idle, or alternatively that, if they were set to work in public institutions, the private manufacturer was equally deprived of his source of labour, the conclusion—expressed in modern term—being that they should be thrown on the market and allowed to starve if they failed to find a place there.[1]

Mandeville pointed the conclusion in his *Fable of the Bees* that :

> The poor have nothing to stir them up to be serviceable but their wants, which it is prudence to relieve but folly to cure. To make society happy it is necessary that great numbers should be wretched as well as poor.[2]

In more clear terms, William Townsend declared in his *Dissertation on the Poor Laws* that :

> Hunger will tame the fiercest animals, it will teach decency and civility, obedience and subjugation, to the most perverse. In general, it is only hunger which can spur and goad them (the poor) on to labour.[3]

This philosophy has brought unspeakable suffering and misery to the masses. It provides moral sanction for the ruthless exploitation of the subjugated and weaker nations. In desperation, the workers and the weaker people rose in revolt. The struggle took a heavy toll of life and is still going on. A system in which the weak and the simple go to the wall while the unscrupulous have their own way, cannot be expected to encourage the development of free and good men.

The Communists seek to overthrow the Capitalist state and, in its place, they want to set up a totalitarian order. The remedy is worse than the disease. No doubt, in a Communist society every man is assured of employment and his basic needs are provided for: but he can hardly be said to be a free man in a free society. He has been reduced to the status of a mere cog in a gigantic machine. He is the member, or rather a part, of a highly regimented society. In action and thought he must conform to the standard set up by party leadership. He is not permitted to think, choose and judge for himself. In the *Rubūbiyyah* society man sells his life to God. In the Communist state he sells his mind to the state. He perceives, remembers, imagines, thinks and believes only what the state wants him to do. He sells his individuality—his self—to the state. He is no longer an end in himself; he is merely the means to the objectives of the state. In short, he is reduced to a status lower than that of a serf or a slave; to the status of a mindless machine. How can the development of a free self be possible in such a society? In the Qur'ānic society man is a volunteer; in the Communist state, a tool. This is but the natural corollary of the philosophy of life on which the Communistic order is based.

In the West, during the last decade the idea of a welfare state has appealed to many thinking men. The

welfare state, like the Qur'ānic society, is intended to provide for the basic needs of citizen. Such a state, however, still remains as an ideal, attainable perhaps but not as yet realised. Even if it is set up, will its members have sufficient incentive to work when they already have all they need? The Qur'ānic society, like the ideal welfare state, seeks to place man above care and want, but unlike the welfare state, it does not weaken but rather stimulates the incentive to work. It inculcates in man that the only ideal worthy of him is the full development of all his latent powers and that he can realise this ideal only through the disinterested service of mankind. He has to *give* and not to *take*. He must work, not for himself but for others. He is fired with the ambition to work hard for the enrichment of the life of all men, *because it is only in this way that he can realise himself.* This urge is so great that economic security does not impair the incentive to work. It is true that bread is the staff of life, but it is equally true that man does not live by bread alone. Both his physical needs and his higher aspirations must be satisfied if he is to enjoy real happiness. Prof. Hawtrey's pregnant remark deserves careful consideration:

> What differentiates economic systems from one another is the character of the motives they invoke to induce people to work.[4]

The fact is that materialistic concept of life cannot provide the motive to work hard for the benefit of others. It is here that both the Capitalistic and the Communistic systems fail to achieve the desired end. Christian states in the West, no doubt, profess to believe in God, but since they are all secular, they are, for practical purposes, as "God-less" as any Communist State. Materialistic concept of life cannot raise man above animal level at which there is no incentive for sacrificing one's own interest for the welfare of others: animals have no values and hence are incapable of conceiving the idea of altruism. The Communistic philosophy of life cannot, therefore, provide a foundation firm enough to bear the load of the huge structure of Communistic social order.

This is possible only in the *Rubūbiyyah* Order based on Qur'ānic concept of life, according to which the ideal is the development of the human *self*, and the *self* develops in proportion to what one does and gives for the benefit of others. This is one of the Permanent Values. Communist economic system blended with Qur'ānic Permanent Values is the only solution of the world problems today. This, in nutshell, is the Qur'ānic Social Order. "Bolshevism plus God," wrote Iqbal to Sir Francis Younghusband, "is almost identical with Islam."[5]

V. The Mystical Way

This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the aims and ideals of Mysticism. We will, however, content ourselves with pointing out the difference between the ways of life advocated by Islam and Mysticism. The mystic, believing that his soul has been polluted by contact with matter, pursues the goal of purifying it and delivering it from the evil grip of matter. He believes that he can accomplish this task by withdrawing from the world, living in seclusion and practising self-mortification and self-abnegation. This view is based on the duality of matter and spirit, a view alien to Islam. Even, apart from this, Islam disapproves of both the goal and the methods by which it is to be attained. For Islam, the goal of man is self-development and it is to be achieved not by shunning the world but by making full use of the opportunities it affords. Islam supports the view that man can enrich his life through the enrichment of all life. Man is exhorted to produce goods not for himself alone, but for the benefit of all men. The Qur'ān declares that the man who believes he is developing his self in seclusion, is only deceiving himself :

> Have you not seen those who think that their personality is developing. Nay, it is only through the Laws given by Allah that personality can develop (4 : 49).

The same idea is elaborated in the following verse :

> Ascribe not "growth of personality" to yourselves. God is best aware of one who abides by His Laws (53 : 32).

Again the Qur'ān asserts :

> Only his personality develops who gives his wealth to others (92 : 18).

According to the teachings of Islam, only that man succeeds in developing his self who first deserves what he gets, and what he gets, he gives freely to others. It is not an act of charity but a duty laid on free rational beings.

Monasticism too is alien to Islam. The cloistered life hinders the growth of the self. It is by co-operating with others for the good of all mankind that man makes progress in self-development. The Qur'ān says :

> But monasticism, they (the Christians) instituted it themselves, only as seeking the good will of God ; yet they could not observe it with its due observance (as it is not possible to do so) (57 : 27).

The best way to realise oneself is through membership of the Order of *Rubūbiyyah*, which is a society dedicated to the pursuit of the absolute values and to the service of all mankind.

References

1. Quoted by E. H. Carr, in *The New Society*, pp. 41-42.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., p. 60.
5. Letter published in the daily *Civil and Military Gazette*, Lahore, dated 30th July 1931.

Chapter XIII

THE RUBŪBIYYAH ORDER—ITS AIM AND SCOPE

(QUR'ĀNIC SOCIAL ORDER)

I. *The Rubūbiyyah Order of Society*

THE main aim of the socio-political group, which embodies the *Rubūbiyyah* Order, is to provide the individual with full scope for self-development. Its basic principles are that the individual is the focus of value and that the group exists to enable the individual to develop and express himself to the full extent of his capacity. It lays primary stress on personal worth. A society based on these principles will be composed of free individuals, each enriching his life by working for the enrichment of all life, and each moving onwards by helping others to do the same. This society should be judged by the solutions it offers for the social, political and economic problems that confront all human groups. We will first consider the economic system it advocates.

II. *Capitalism and the Rubūbiyyah Order*

Capitalism is the oldest of economic systems. In course of time it was invested with an air of sanctity. People believed that it was the only system which was suited to "human nature." They could not imagine that society could prosper and flourish under any other type of economic organisation. The industrial and commercial revolutions gave it a powerful impetus and it reached its peak in the nineteenth century. When Capitalism was carried to the extreme, its defects became obvious and could no longer

be ignored. No doubt, Capitalism has certain merits and, in the earlier stages of social evolution, it helped man to create civilization and achieve a higher standard of life. It calls forth some of the best qualities in man, such as initiative, ingenuity, imagination and a capacity for hard work. But its weakness, which washes away all its good points, is that it over-emphasizes one factor of production, namely capital—nay, it gives all credit to it—and fails to do justice to the other equally—rather more—important factor, namely labour. The result is that the bulk of the wealth produced goes to the man who contributes capital and the labourer has to be content with a mere pittance. Capital tends to accumulate in the hands of the few while poverty is the lot of the labourers who constitute the bulk of the population. This unequal distribution of the national wealth, a necessary consequence of Capitalism, is tolerated for a time, but, sooner or later, it generates class struggle and paves the way to the dissolution of society. Capitalism is based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that man has an inviolable right to the property that he has acquired. The second is that society can prosper only when it does not interfere with the economic activity of the individual. The Capitalist pins his faith on the doctrine of *laissez-faire* and holds private property to be sacred. He argues that what he has earned through his own ability, skill and effort, must be exclusively his own. Nobody can claim a share in it. He may, if he likes, give a part or the whole of it to another but no one can force him to do so. He will be doing no wrong if he keeps it all to himself. This attitude is exemplified in *Korah* whose story is narrated in the Qur'ān. When he was asked to give a part of his immense wealth to the needy and the poor, he replied exactly like the Capitalist of today. "Why should I? This is the result of my own capability" (28 : 78). The Qur'ān tells us that man commits a grave mistake if he believes that he owes his wealth exclusively to his own ability and effort :

Now, when harm falls on man, he cries to Us, and afterwards, when We have granted him a boon from Us, he says: "Only by means

of my own ability I obtained it." Nay, it is a mischief (to think so) but most of them know not (39 : 49).

The main fallacy inherent in the Capitalists' argument is made evident when we look at the conditions on which the production of wealth depends. Four factors, stated below, contribute to the production of wealth:

1. Man's physical and mental capacities.
2. The education and training he has received.
3. The opportunities available to him.
4. His industry.

It is obvious that man can take credit for only the fourth factor, i.e., the work he puts in. His natural endowments are a gift of God. He did not acquire them through his own efforts. He is indebted to his community for the education and training he has received. Society too provides him with opportunities for producing wealth. It follows that man can justly claim only that portion of the wealth he has produced which is the outcome of the labour he had put in. The work he has performed entitles him to a share in the wealth produced and not to the whole of it. The Qur'ān puts it clearly:

Man shall have only that for which he strives (53 : 39).

If this principle is accepted and acted upon in good faith, the conflict between workers and employers will disappear and a serious menace to internal peace will be removed. The Capitalist will willingly spend the major portion of his profits for the welfare of the community and the workers will be able to live in comfort and security. This principle is challenged on the ground that there are innate differences among men and it is unfair to treat them as equal in respect of ability. Those who possess greater ability can justly claim a greater share in the national wealth. The Qur'ānic view is that the personal worth of man does not depend on his talent to do a thing but on what he actually does. All men are equal in the sight of God, whatever may be the differences among them. Moreover, the argument of the Capitalist had weight so long as it was believed that

intellectual work was more valuable than manual work. We now believe in the spectrum of values. Any type of work is as valuable as any other, provided man puts his heart into it. Manual work can have as much value as intellectual work. Besides this, the differences among men bestow on each his unique individuality. However different men may be in respect of intelligence, they can be equal in respect of personal worth, if each works conscientiously to the limit of his capacity. So it is in the interest of society that some men should possess more ability in a particular sphere than others. According to the Qur'ān, the difference in ability amongst various individuals is for the purpose of division of labour (43 : 32), and should not constitute a ground for creating inequality in society and meting out different treatment to different sets of men. The knowledge that men are unequal should not be allowed to induce us to relax our efforts to raise the general standard of living in the society. The *Rubūbiyyah* Order is committed to provide the means for the development of each and every individual. It treats as sacred the right of every man to have full scope for his development.

Division of labour is meant to ensure maximum production of wealth. It does not imply that the man who does manual work is inferior to the man who organises the industry. No doubt, the work of one person may be more remunerative than that of another. The Qur'ān takes the position that a person who earns more should not keep it all to himself, but should give the surplus to those who, through lack of ability or opportunity cannot earn enough to satisfy their needs. In the ideal society emphasis would be on mutual help and not on individualism. The following verse puts it clearly:

> And Allah has blessed some of you above others in respect of capacity to earn livelihood, yet those who are blessed (with an abundance) restore not their provision to those subordinate to them so that they may share equally with them. Is it then the blessing of Allah which they deny? (16 : 71).

The "blessing of Allah" comprises those advantages that the individual enjoys which have not been gained

through his own efforts, namely his innate capacities, education and other opportunities. In gratitude for these gifts, he should use his wealth to help those who are less fortunate than himself. He should regard his wealth as the gift of God and his gratitude to God should be expressed in acts of beneficence. We should all live as members of a single family, and we are really that, being, so to say, "God's children." The father does not discriminate between his children. He loves them all alike. God, as the Qur'ān says, is *Rabbul-'ālamīn* (1:1). He takes care of every living being in the world. The concept of the "One World," developed during the last decade, was foreshadowed by the Qur'ān a long time ago.

A necessary consequence of this view is that the means of production should not be owned by any one person or group but should be held in common by all. The Qur'ān throws valuable light on this point as will be shown in the next section.

III. Means of Production

Land is the most important of the means of production. The desire to possess it has proved to be a fertile source of strife between individuals as well as between states. Most of the wars have been waged for the acquisition of land. Endless litigation has been the result of disputes regarding the ownership of land. The Qur'ān categorically states that the earth belongs to God and serves the purpose of providing subsistence to all living creatures. Private ownership of land is thus ruled out:

> And the earth (land) He has created for the benefit of all living beings (55: 10).

It is the source of livelihood for men as well as other creatures:

> And We have provided therein (in the land) sustenance for you, and for those for whom you do not provide (15: 20).

The point is stressed in another verse:

> And after that He spread the earth and brought forth from it its water and its pasture. And mountains He firmly set. (All this He did) as a provision for you and your cattle (79 : 30-33).

It is thus clear that land, like water and air, heat and light, is God's gift to all men. For a man to claim proprietary right to them is, therefore, tantamount to claiming equality with God. The Qur'ān declares in no uncertain terms:

> Say thou: Do ye indeed believe not in Him Who created the earth in two long ages and ascribe ye unto Him rivals? He (and none else) is the Nourisher of the universe. And He placed therein stable mountains above it and blessed it, and measured therein its foods in four periods (seasons of the year), *alike* for those who stand in need of it (41 : 9-10).

Just as the amount of work put in by man determines his rightful share in the wealth produced, so his share in the produce of the land shall be proportionate to his labour on it. If it had not been for diverse favourable factors, his labour would have been in vain. The Qur'ān points out this in the following verses:

> And have you seen that which you cultivate? Do you make the seed to grow or do We make it to grow? If We willed We could surely make it dry, then you cease not to exclaim: Lo! We are laden with debt, nay but we are deprived of harvest. And have you observed that water which you drink? Is it you who shed it from the raincloud, or are We the shedder? If We willed We could make it bitter. Why then are you not grateful? And have you observed the fire which you strike out? Was it you who made the tree thereof to grow, or were We the grower? We (have mentioned all this just to) remind you (of the real facts). Remember! We have made all this means of provision for the hungry (56 : 63-73).

We are, therefore, driven to the conclusion that in participating in the Divine programme of the *Rubūbiyyah* Order, we are participating in a joint business venture in which the capital investment is made by God and we contribute only labour. We can claim only that part of the land's produce which we have earned through our labour and must hand over the rest to God, that is, devote for the benefit of society. The poet Iqbal has expressed this idea in lines of exquisite beauty, translated as below:

Who nourishes the seed in the soil which no ray of light penetrates?
Who raises clouds from the waves of the ocean?
Who drove hither favourable wind from the West?
Whose is the soil, whose the light of the Sun?
Who has filled the ear of corn with pearly grain?
Who has taught the seasons to change with regularity?
Landowner! The land is neither thine nor mine;
Thy forefathers did not own it, nor dost thou nor I.
(*Bāl-e-Jibrīl*, p. 161).

The Qur'ān declares that the produce of the earth is the "means of sustenance for *mankind*" (50 : 11). The slightest change in the natural order could deprive man of the means of sustenance:

Who is he that will provide for you if He should withhold His provision? (67: 21).

The same idea is elaborated in the following verses:

Let man consider his food.
How We pour water in showers
Then split the earth in clefts
And cause the grain to grow therein
And grapes and green fodder
And olive-trees and palm-trees
And garden-closes of thick foliage
And fruit and grasses.
Provision for you and your cattle (80 : 24-32).

Ownership of land is not sanctioned by the Qur'ān, nor is that of any other means of production. The animals eat as much as they need and leave the remainder for others. Man alone is plagued with the desire to hoard and takes pride in his store, thus keeping for himself what he does not really need:

And how many a living creature that does not carry its sustenance (29: 60).

The desire to hoard starts the process which culminates in the Capitalistic system. Capitalism, by enabling the rich to exploit the poor, has filled the world with misery, hatred and mutual suspicions. It has turned the world into a veritable hell. The Qur'ān has denounced

Capitalists as the enemies of mankind :

They who hoard up gold and silver and spend it not for the cause set forth by Allah, unto them give tidings (O Muḥammad !) of a painful doom, on the day when it will all be heated in the fire of *Jahannam*, and their foreheads and their flanks and their backs will be branded therewith (and it will be said unto them) : Here is that which you hoarded for yourselves. Now taste of what you used to hoard (9 : 34-35).

Capitalism appeals to the self-seeking motives of man and tempts those who have amassed wealth to give free rein to their anti-social tendencies. Let them not forget the doom which, in the words of the Qur'ān, is sure to overtake those who profit by a system so detrimental to the real interests of mankind :

And let not those who hoard up that which Allah has bestowed upon them of His bounty, think that it is better for them. Nay, it is worse for them. That which they hoard will be their collar on the occasion of the manifestation of the results of their deeds; and Allah's is the heritage of the heavens and the earth, and He is well aware of what you do (3 : 179).

Capitalism is a fertile source of misery for mankind and is thus an inhuman system. It will certainly be abandoned when men become more enlightened and have a clearer perception of their real interests :

Lo! ye are those who are called to spend for the cause set forth by Allah. And as for him who hoardeth and thus depriveth others of the provision for life, really depriveth his own self thereof. And Allah is the rich and ye are the poor. And if ye turn away, He will bring in your stead a people other than you; and they shall not be like you (47 : 38).

This is the verdict of history too. The Qur'ān exhorts us to pay attention to the fate of nations which devoted themselves to amassing wealth and turned their back on high ideals. They were supplanted by other nations :

And how many a people that dealt unjustly, have We shattered; and raised after them another folk (21 : 11).

Man is under an obligation to work to his utmost to earn his livelihood, then to keep for himself what he needs and hand over the remainder to his society. The Qur'ān is

explicit on this point:

And they will ask thee: "What it is they should give away." Say thou: "The surplus" (2: 219).

IV. Period of Transition

However, the Capitalist system cannot be abolished by the stroke of a pen. It is firmly established and appears to be essential to modern society. It will be some time before it is uprooted and replaced by the Order of *Rubūbiyyah.* We must face this fact without giving way to despair. We should bear in mind that man can make progress only slowly and gradually. So long as he is moving steadily in the right direction, he need not get impatient. It is not easy to attain a high objective. He should work hard and wait patiently but confidently for ultimate success. The Qur'ān advises us to proceed cautiously in this matter and not to be hasty and rash. It has proposed diverse measures to guard against the accumulation of wealth in the hands of the few. Usury, i.e., money earned by capital, is declared to be unlawful. The law of inheritance is designed to ensure the equitable distribution of a deceased person's wealth among all his relatives. Man is enjoined to help his parents, relatives and all others in need, generously and to make all possible concessions to those who owe him money. By prohibiting hoarding, it ensures that money is kept in circulation. In short, the Qur'ān has recommended the steps by which ultimately the *Rubūbiyyah* Order might be inaugurated. All these measures, however, are valid only during the period of transition. Under the *Rubūbiyyah* Order, every man will willingly make over to his society whatever he does not need for satisfying his basic wants. The *Rasūl,* being the head of this Order, was the first to show by practical example how this higher goal should be achieved. He never hoarded a single penny throughout his life, nor owned any property. By following his example we can hope to make progress towards the goal of perfection. What is needed is the

realisation that the *Rububiyyah* Order alone can bring peace, prosperity and happiness to mankind, and can open the way to progress and development of man. When this realisation has dawned, it will not be a difficult task to transform modern society into the *Rubūbiyyah* Order. Already there are signs that the process has started :

> Verily, the promised revolution is sure to come ; there is no doubt about it ; yet most of mankind believe not (40 : 59).

The Divine creative activity which makes for progress, is certainly at work in the world of man as it is in nature :

> And He it is Whose Laws operate in the heavens (outer universe) and in the earth (human society) and He is the wise and the knowing (43 : 84).

To sum up, the *Rubūbiyyah* Order ascribes supreme value to the human self and aims at creating conditions in which the self can freely develop and gradually attain perfection. This distinguishes the Order from other systems and ideologies. We should not allow ourselves to be misled by superficial resemblance between the Communist state and the Qur'ānic society. The Communist state is no doubt free from the vices of Capitalism, but it functions in the interest of the group or rather the party and is not interested in the individual man. The masses are mere raw material which the party leadership can mould as it likes. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, seeks to protect, preserve and enhance man's self. This intense preoccupation with personal worth distinguishes Islam from Communism and Totalitarianism.

Note : As already stated in the Introduction, the economic system of Islam has been touched upon only casually in the present work. It has been discussed in detail in another book which is likely to come out before long.

Chapter XIV

POLITICAL SYSTEM

PART I

MAN-MADE SYSTEM

I. *Primitive Age*

ANTHROPOLOGY does not support the view that man ever lived a solitary life like the tiger or the lion. He was weak and defenceless against the powerful beasts that roamed about him. He could survive only through some form of group life. A band of men could survive under conditions in which a single individual had no chance, so early men naturally lived in groups. Some form of social organisation is necessary for group life. Men can co-operate with each other only at the cost of their egoistic impulses. The dictates of group life invade individual liberty. The first social ties came from blood relationship. The groups were almost overgrown families. The authority exercised by the father passed into the hands of the patriarch, the head of the tribe. Custom regulated the conduct of the members of this group. Primitive man believed that the customs of his tribe were unchangeable and inviolable. Patriarchal authority and rigid customs protected the social order and were an effective check to all kinds of anti-social activities in which individuals might be tempted to engage. However, a new authority emerged in the group—this was the priest. His supremacy was founded on his expert knowledge of the religious ritual, and of correct behaviour in the temple and on solemn occasions. Ritual had

gradually become very complex and the patriarch had to place it in the charge of a professional man. Superstition, a factor to be reckoned with in primitive life, lent powerful support to the authority of the priest. In a changing world no form of social organisation can be permanent. The tribal organisation dissolved giving place to a purely political organisation. The Raja or King supplanted the patriarch. He was usually a man who had organised a military force which had enabled him to extend his dominion over several tribes. The political system that arose was composed of different tribes. A consequence of this change was that the hold of tribal customs on man was considerably weakened. People saw their fellow-citizens observing different customs, and hence any particular custom could no longer be regarded as sacred and inviolable. The social order had now to be maintained by physical force. If the king was powerful, he usually succeeded in this task and held the straggling group together. He usually relied on officials whom he had personally appointed. The new social order, however, could not be as stable as the tribal order which was based on blood-ties and time-honoured customs. Men could not be held in check for long by mere brute force. Risings and rebellions often shook the king's authority. In this predicament he sought for an ally and such an ally was close at hand. The priest also had vested interests which he was not willing to relinquish. Any social or political upheaval would endanger the vested interests of both the king and the priest. The result was that the king and the priest made common cause, and each gave the other mutual support. The king bolstered the power of the priests in the religious domain and took steps to protect the interests of the sacerdotal order. The grateful priest cloaked the king with sanctity and awe. The obedience of the people was now enforced both by force and superstition.

II. Struggles Between the Rulers and the Subjects

There is something in man which chafes at external compulsion. In the heart of man the flame of freedom

may sometimes flicker, but is never extinguished. The patience of man is not inexhaustible, and subjected to the double tyranny of priest and king, he became more and more discontented. He longed for intellectual as well as political freedom. It was not long before he rose against the hold of the priest and the authority of the king. History has recorded the long drawn out and sanguinary struggle of the masses to regain their freedom and over-throw both spiritual and political yokes. The participants in this struggle could be identified as:

1. The rulers, temporal and spiritual, who strove hard for the *status quo.*
2. Ambitious elements who tried to carve a slice of their own.
3. Common people who tried again and again to throw off their oppressing weights.
4. A few men of reflective type of mind who set themselves to the more difficult task of devising a political system which would reconcile authority with individual freedom. They wanted to protect the social order as, above all, they feared political chaos; but they also wanted the individual to enjoy the freedom which is his birth right.

Full of interest is the history of man's attempts to devise a socio-political system which would concede man's basic human rights and at the same time would place social order on a secure basis. One such attempt was made by the Christian priests. They evolved a system which is known as Theocracy. It did not go very well, mainly because of the fanatical and oppressive demands it made on human liberties. It was a tyranny sanctioned by religion. It was done in the name of Christianity, although Christianity claimed to stand only for the "spiritual" freedom of man. In the words of Viscount Samuel:

> It (Christianity) has supported the doctrine of the 'Divine Right of Kings' and must bear responsibility for all the evil consequences of that doctrine in the history of Europe.[1]

III. Might is Right

The doctrine that might is right also had its advocates. It was defended by specious arguments. It was said that a social order which had not the support of the powerful, could not last long. Throughout human history, those who had power had ruled over the weak. To make the mighty and the weak equal is to fly in the face of nature, argued the opponents of Right. Reasonable men have always found this doctrine of Might revolting and humiliating.

IV. Theory of Contract

The doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings was challenged by some great thinkers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau and others developed a rival theory to account for the rise of kingship and to justify the king's claim to the obedience of his subjects. The theory of social contract is based on a myth. It is supposed that, at first, there was no restraint placed on man's action. Law and order did not exist and men had no conception of rights and duties. The law of the jungle prevailed and every man fought for his own interest. This condition of lawlessness soon became intolerable. The sense of insecurity became too painful. Even the strong man was assailed by the fear that a stronger one might come any time and deprive him of his possessions. Men eventually came together and agreed to pay any price for social security. They agreed to relinquish their freedom and put themselves under the absolute authority of a king. The king's duty was to enforce the laws and see that no injustice was done to any of his subjects. The king's right to rule had, therefore, its source in the consent of the people. That consent might be withdrawn if the king failed to discharge the duty assigned to him. Kingship, thus, came to be regarded as a man-made institution. Popular will had made him the king and popular will might dethrone him.

The theory of social contract was not, however, based on a conscious historical fact. Nevertheless, it was

ingenious in its own way. It divested kingship of its celestial power and made the general will of the people the ultimate source of authority. The way was thus paved for the advent of democracy.

With the rise of democracy, the problem of sovereignty came to the fore. To whom does sovereignty belong? Different answers were given but they all agree in vesting it in the people. Rousseau maintained that sovereignty belonged to people as a whole. Locke held that it belonged to the majority of the people. Karl Marx vests it in those who control the means of production. Capitalism vests sovereignty in the capitalist class while Socialism vests it in the labouring class.

V. Democracy

Democracy is now generally regarded as the best form of government. It developed chiefly in the West, but people in Asia and Africa also regard it as the last word in political wisdom. Let us examine its claims carefully and see how far the praise showered upon it is justified. Democracy has been defined as the government of the people, by the people, for the people. It is chiefly the second factor in this definition that calls for comment here. It means that in a democratic state there is no distinction between the rulers and the ruled. The people are supposed to rule themselves. They cannot do so directly, so they elect their representatives. These representatives, in turn, select the ministers who actually run the government. The laws and policies of the state and the principal measures adopted by the government do indeed reflect the will of the people, not of the whole people but of the majority of them.

This in brief is democracy. There is no doubt that this is the best system man has been able so far to evolve for himself. The basic concept on which it rests, namely, that nobody has a right to rule over another, is ideal. But the point is whether it has achieved, or is capable of achieving the aim it has laid before it. The

West has been the cradle of democracy, so we may ask what the thinkers there have to say about it.

VI. Democracy's Failure

In his book *The Crisis of Civilisation* Professor Alfred Cobban of London University, discussing the causes of the decline of Western civilisation, says :

> Considering politics in terms of actual facts and not of abstract theories, it must be acknowledged that the identification of ruler and the ruled, assumed in the theory of the sovereignty of people, is a practical impossibility. The government is one set of people and the governed another. Once society has developed beyond the smallest and the most primitive communities, they never have been and never can be the same. The pretence that they are can only lead to the worst excesses of power in the state (p. 68).

Professor A. C. Ewing of Cambridge University has discussed democracy in his book *The Individual, the State and World Government.* The following quotation from the book shows the trend of his thought:

> Had Rousseau written now, and not, as he did, prior to any experience of democracy in the modern world, he could not have been so optimistic (p. 116).

A similar view has been expressed by another thinker, Rene Guenon, in his book *The Crisis of the Modern World.* The relevant passage, though long, deserves to be quoted in full :

> If the word 'democracy' is defined as the government of the people by themselves, it expresses an absolute impossibility and cannot even have a mere de facto existence in our time any more than in any other. It is contradictory to say that the same persons can be, at the same time, rulers and ruled, because, to use the Aristotelian phraseology, the same being cannot be 'in act' and 'in potency' at the same time and in the same circle of relations. The relationship of the ruler and ruled necessitates the joint presence of two terms ; there could be no ruled if there were not also rulers, even though those be illegitimate and have no other title to power than their own pretensions ; but the great ability of those who are in control in the modern world lies in making the people believe that they are governing themselves, and the people are the more inclined to believe this as they are flattered by it and as they are in any case,

incapable of sufficient reflection to see its impossibility. It was to create this illusion that 'universal suffrage' was invented. The law is supposed to be made by the opinion of the majority but what is overlooked is that this opinion is something that can very easily be guided and modified; it is always possible by means of suitable suggestions to arouse in it currents moving in this or that direction as desired.[2]

All these writers have taken pains to show that the belief that in democracy sovereignty or the absolute and unrestricted right of law-making belongs to the people, has no basis in fact. It has been supposed that the law enacted by the majority vote of the representatives of the people embodies the unanimous decision of all the citizens of the state and that, therefore, it is based on justice. This assumption is the chief cause of the decline of democracy in the present day. This view has been supported by Mencken, as the passage given belew shows:

Under all such failures there is a greater one: the failure of man, the most social of all the higher animals and by far the most intelligent, to provide himself with anything, even remotely described as good government. He has made many attempts in that direction, some of them very ingenious and others sublimely heroic, but they have always come to grief in the execution. The reason surely is not occult; it is to be found in the abysmal difference between what Government is in theory and what it is in fact. In theory it is simply a device for supplying a variable series of common needs, and the men constituting it (as all ranks of them are so fond of saying) are only public servants; but in fact, its main purpose is not service at all, but exploitation.[3]

He proceeds on:

Of all the varieties of government, it is probably democracy that has fared worse at the hands of these brethren. Knowing very well as a cardinal article of their art, how little people in general are moved by rational ideas and how much by mere hullabaloo, they make common cause with every pressure group that comes along, and are thus maintained in office by an endless series of public enemies.[4]

Arnold J. Toynbee writes (in his recent book, *The Present Day Experiment in Western Civilisation*, 1962):

Democratic parliamentary government is a less efficient and, therefore, a more wasteful regime than oligarchic parliamentary government, and even a parliamentary oligarchy is inefficient and

extravagant by comparison with a well-managed authoritarian regime (p. 35).

VII. UNO's Questionnaire

In 1947, UNESCO, the cultural organ of the U.N., set up a research committee to study and report on the working of the democratic system in different countries. The Committee invited some great scholars to contribute articles to the proposed volume on democracy. All shades of opinion were represented in the volume which was published under the title *Democracy in a World of Tensions*. "What is the meaning of democracy?" was the first question that they were asked. Most of the scholars admitted that the word was vague and its precise sense had not been determined. A few went so far as to call it "one of the most ambiguous words in current usage" (p. 460).

The next question asked was, "Is the majority vote always correct, and a protest against it is a protest against democracy"? The answer was:

> It does not, however, imply that the judgment of the majority is inerrant; and it, therefore, allows freedom to minorities to agitate and vote for the reversal of previous majority decisions (p. 504).

While pointing out its defects we must be fair and recognise the merits of the democratic system at the same time. The democratic form of government would pass muster in any comparison with kingship, despotism and theocracy.* It is a bold advance on the earlier forms. By asserting equality of all men, by requiring the state to advance the interests of the people and by enlarging the area of individual freedom, it has rendered remarkable service to humanity. The criticism levelled against it really applies not to democracy in general, but to its typical form developed in the West. This form of democracy is based on secularism and, therefore, suffers from a fatal weakness. It is built on the shifting sands

*Theocracy is the worst form of despotism. Under this system, people are exploited in the name of God. There is no place for priests in *Din*.

of changing human interests and beliefs. Because it is not grounded in permanent values, it is at the mercy of every gust of wind. Secular democracy is in fact a reaction to theocracy which, directly or indirectly, had disturbed the very basis of peace and freedom in Europe. Theological disputes continually threatened internal peace. Secularism tried to solve the problem by excluding morality and religion from the purview of government and making them matters of private concern of the individual. The unfortunate result was that man in his political life was left with no stable frame of reference and no objective standard to guide him. Political decisions could be made not on the basis of any established principle, but under the influence of passing national mood. "To err is human" was proved to be too true. Men often judged wrongly and acted wrongly, both collectively and as individuals. The supposition that people as a whole can never go wrong received little support in actual practice. Collective wisdom has been as imperfect and fallible as individual wisdom. The governments that evolved reflected the individual failings. According to Lord Snell:

> Governments are always composed of men who share the general imperfections of mankind, with the result that they can never be more noble or more enlightened than are the human beings who administer their laws and shape their policy.[5]

Aldous Huxley makes the same point in his book, *Science, Liberty and Peace*, when he says:

> There has never been a time when too much power did not corrupt its possessors, and there is absolutely no reason to suppose that in this respect, the future behaviour of human beings will be in any way different from their behaviour in the past and at the present time (p. 41).

Objective standards based on permanent values take a long-term view. Without them man cannot look very far beyond his immediate selfish interests which may not, in the long run, be to his own best advantage. His legislative efforts, all by himself, ultimately may not only prove detrimental to himself but may also alienate him from his surrounding groups.

Social groupings have inevitably led to the division of mankind. Each group promotes friendship between its members and incites them to take hostile attitude towards other groups to maintain its own interests. Feuds between tribes used to be bitter and recurrent. Tribes were later supplanted by national states. Hostility to the outgroup is as characteristic of nations as it was of tribes. Every nation has feeling of ill-will and hatred towards its neighbour. The slightest provocation sends them flying at each other's throats. Prof. Cobban's remarks on this point should be noted :

> Nationalism is a feeling which is born out of hatred and lives on enmity. Nations become aware of themselves by their conflicts with other nations and their feelings of hostility do not cease with the completion of national unity. No sooner has a nation asserted its own right to self-determination than it sets about oppressing other nations that make the same claim. For all these reasons it may be concluded that nationalism is a very dangerous foundation for a state.[6]

Fredrick Hertz, the historian of nationalism, writes as follows in his book *Nationality in History and Politics* :

> History shows that for the greater part the quarrels between several nations had scarcely any other occasion than that these nations were different combinations of people and called by different names. To an Englishman, the name of a Frenchman, Spaniard, or an Italian raises, of course, ideas of hatred and contempt. Yet the simple name of man, applied properly, never fails to work a salutary effect (p. 328).

In his book, *New Hopes for a Changing World*, Bertrand Russell has expressed the view that in the present age, the thing which stands in the way of social contacts extending beyond the limits of the nation and which, therefore, poses the most serious threat to the human race, is the cult of nationalism. We note with surprise that while Russell condemns nationalism in general, he speaks highly of the nationalism of his own people.

There is, however, a fundamental difference between the tribes of the past and the nations of the present day. Nationalism does not merely indicate a form of political grouping : it has developed into a cult which arouses in

the individual passionate devotion to his nation and violent antipathy to other nations. It is odd that the West, which has practically turned its back to religion as not suitable for rational men, should have espoused the pseudo-religious cult of nationalism. Aldous Huxley's comment on this is worth noting :

> Nationalism leads to moral ruin, because it denies universality, denies the existence of a single God, denies the value of the human being as a human being; and because at the same time, it affirms exclusiveness, encourages vanity, pride and self-satisfaction, stimulates hatred and proclaims the necessity and rightness of war.[7]

The same writer makes the following remarks at another place :

> Twentieth century political thinking is incredibly primitive. The nation is personified as a living being, with passions, desires, susceptibilities. The National Person is superhuman in size and energy, but completely sub-human in morality. Ordinarily, decent behaviour cannot be expected of the National Person, who is thought of as incapable of patience, forbearance, forgiveness and even of common sense and enlightened self-interest. Men, who in private life behave as reasonable and moral beings, become transformed as soon as they are acting as representatives of a National Person, into the likeness of their stupid, hysterical and insanely touchy tribal divinity. This being so, there is little to be hoped for at the present time, from general international conference.[8]

A thought-provoking passage by Adam de Hegedus is quoted below :

> At the bottom of these two wars, there was the same anarchic division of the world into sovereign independent nation states, which by their very nature, are forced to compete and conflict with each other and are unable to create a mutually healthy economic organization. The worst feature of this situation is not so much the recurrence of war as the absence of peace.[9]

VIII. Patriotism

Nationalism has implanted in the mind of man the belief that patriotism is the noblest and highest virtue. The slogan of the patriots is : "My country, right or wrong." Rumelin, Chancellor of Tubingen University, wrote (in 1875) that :

The state is autarchic. Self regard is its appointed duty ; the maintenance and development of its own power and well-being. Egoism—if you call this egoism—is the supreme principle of all politics. The State can only have regard to the interest of any other State so far as this can be identified with its own interests. Self devotion is the principle for the individual ; self assertion for the State. The maintenance of the State justifies every sacrifice, and is superior to every moral rule.[10]

Rumelin is brutally frank, but Lord Grey has expressed the same sentiment in milder language :

I am a great lover of morality, public and private ; but the intercourse of nations cannot be strictly regulated by that rule.[11]

While Burke was denouncing the Revolution, Walpole wrote :

No great country was ever saved by good men, because good men will not go to the lengths that may be necessary.[12]

Prof. C.E.M. Joad makes the following observations :

The practical effect of idealist theory in its bearing upon the relations between States is, therefore, to create a double standard of morality. There is one system of morals for the individual and another for the State so that men who, in private life, are humane, honest and trust-worthy, believe that, when they have dealings on the State's behalf with the representatives of other States, they are justified in behaving in ways of which as private individuals, they would be heartily ashamed.[13]

Cavour has given this view in nut-shell :

If we did for ourselves what we do for our country, what rascals we should be.[14]

The general acceptance by the West of the creed of nationalism has had three unfortunate results :

1. Humanity has divided into a number of Nation States with conflicting interests.
2. A powerful nation was tempted to exploit the weaker nations on the pretext of safeguarding its interests.
3. The absence of moral restraint turned the world, as Wakeman has rightly observed, "into an arena of beasts, with only one principle in view, that is, might is right."[15]

It is in fact the Machiavellian spirit which had dominated tbe Western mind in the modern age. The Western rulers have taken to heart Machiavelli's cynical advice in his *Prince* :

A prince being thus obliged to know well how to act as a beast must imitate the fox and the lion, for the lion cannot protect himself from traps and the fox cannot defend himself from wolves. One must, therefore, be a fox to recognise traps, and a lion to frighten wolves. Those that wish to be only lions do not understand this. Therefore, a prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist.[16]

After mentioning a few good qualities of conduct he says :

It is not, therefore, necessary for a prince to have all the above named (good) qualities, but it is very necessary to seem to have them. I would even be abold to say that to possess them and always to observe them is dangerous, but to appear to possess them is useful. Thus it is well to seem merciful, faithful, humane, sincere, religious and also to be so ; but you must have the mind so disposed that when it is needful to be otherwise you may be able to change to the opposite qualities. And it must be understood that a prince, and especially a new prince, cannot observe all those things which are considered good in men, being often obliged, in order to maintain the State, to act against faith, against charity, against humanity, and against religion. And, therefore, he must have a mind disposed to adapt itself according to the wind, and as the variations of fortune dictate, and as I said before, not deviate from what is good, if possible, but be able to do evil if constrained.[17]

No apology is needed for quoting at such length from the book as it is well known that the *Prince* has been the Bible of Western politicians and rulers ever since it was written. It was the constant companion of Charles V, his son and his courtiers. Thomas Cromwell brought a copy from Italy and kept it under his pillow when he went to bed. Catherine de Medici, the daughter of the prince to whom the book was dedicated, brought it to France and her political views were deeply influenced by it. Her son, Henry III, always carried it in his pocket. When he was murdered, it was found on his person. The same was the case with Henry IV. Several Popes and kings admired it and approved of its political

philosophy. Frederick II, who invariably acted on its principles in his dealings with other rulers, wrote in his *Political Testament* as follows :

> The great matter is to conceal one's designs and to cover up one's character. . . . . . Policy consists rather in profiting by favourable conjunctures than in preparing them in advance. This is why I counsel you not to make treaties depending on uncertain events, and to keep your hands free. For then you can make your decision according to time and place, and the conditions of your affairs, in a word, according as your interest requires of you.[18]

Politicians who follow Machiavelli believe that moral rules are not binding on them. They reject moral considerations as irrelevant to political affairs. Even in the present age there are many enthusiastic followers of Machiavelli. John F. Kennedy (in his book, *Profiles In Courage*, 1963) quotes Frank Kant, saying :

> Probably the most important single accomplishment for the political ambitious is the fine art of seeming to say something without doing so. . . . . . The important thing is not to be on the right side of the current issue but on the popular side . . . . regardless of your own conviction or of the facts. The business of getting the votes is a severely practical one into which matters of morality, of right and wrong, would not be allowed to intrude (p. 8).

Kennedy continues :

> But this is no real problem, some one will say. Always do what is right, regardless of whether it is popular. Ignore the pressure, the temptation, the false compromises. That is an easy answer—but it is easy only for those who do not bear the responsibilities of elected office (p. 11).

Machiavelli's views cannot, therefore, be dismissed as obsolete.

IX. Western Thinkers

No social group is free from inner conflicts. The main source of all conflicts is the clash of interest among the members of the same group or between different groups. No political system has, so far, been devised that eliminates internal conflict. Democracy is no exception. It has even intensified internal stresses and

in the international sphere has given an impetus to power politics. Nevertheless, modern thinkers have not lost faith in democracy and believe that its defects are not irremediable. Let us see what remedies they have suggested.

Democracy is based on two fundamental suppositions. The first supposition is that sovereignty is vested in the people and the second is that decisions arrived at by majority vote are always right. Prof. Cobban's remarks on the basis of democracy are worthy of careful consideration :

> The traditional justification for the sovereignty of the people is that the government must be founded on either force or consent, and that since force cannot make right, rightful government must be based on consent. But this is neither logical nor is it true. The fact that a million people consent to an act which is wrong, does not make it any the less wrong. If words have any meaning, the rightfulness of any government's authority depends on its objects and on the way in which it is exercised. A will ought to prevail only if it is a good will ; but this is dependent not upon whose will it is but upon its content.[19]

X. *Moral Standard*

Prof. Cobban has proposed "Moral values" as the standard for judging right and wrong, instead of the majority vote. Locke calls it an "immutable" or "natural law." We quote from Mabbott :

> There is an immutable law governing the just relations between man and man, independently of any society or state to which they may belong. This natural law would serve like natural rights as a limitation on the absolute rule of governments, however constituted and whatever other ends they may pursue.[20]

XI. *Locke's Mistake*

Locke put his trust in Natural Law, to guide aright. He argued that people followed the Natural Law as long as they lived naturally and were without culture and civilisation. At this time reason was their guide, and not sentiment. Later on, they were guided by sentiment

and ceased to live in accordance with the Natural Law. The revival and enforcement of Natural Law was what society needed now. But when we ask how this Natural Law can be discovered, Locke refers us to the "will of the majority." Here he seems to be arguing in a circle. The decision of the majority is right if it conforms to the Natural Law, and the Natural Law is manifested only in the will of the majority. Natural Law cannot, therefore, serve as an objective standard for judging the actions of a nation. When Locke sees a government acting unjustly he cries out "a government has no right to thrust its will on the people; it must conform to the immutable law of nature." However, when he is asked to specify the source of the Natural Law, he can think of nothing better than the will of the majority. This looks like "seeking protection from rain by standing under the roofgutter." The result was just the reverse of what he thought. His idea was to free mankind from the shackles of everchanging man-made laws but his theory of Natural Law culminated in the modern Secular State. No doubt, in the first instance, "the Schoolmen joined this theory to Christian theology by giving it a bias in Divine Will and thereby implanted it firmly in medieval political thought."[21] Subsequently, however, "the task accomplished by the early modernisers of natural law theory in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and especially Hugo Grotius and Samuel Pufendorf, was almost the reverse." By extracting God from natural law they made it the foundation of the modern secular constitutional state. They constructed a theory of natural law that would "carry conviction in an age in which theological controversy was gradually losing the power to do so," thereby making the "existence of God perfectly superfluous to the doctrine."[22]

XII. Higher Law

The general trend amongst modern thinkers in the West now is that it is wrong to accept the majority decision as right in all circumstances. We need an objective standard for judging human actions. For Locke

it was Natural Law. Cobban calls it the moral standard. The Italian patriot, Mazzini, however, puts it in a more definite shape when he says that the principle of universal suffrage was a good thing inasmuch as it provides a lawful method for a people for guarding against forces of destruction and continuing their own government. However, in a people who have no common beliefs, all that democracy can do is to safeguard the interests of the majority and keep the minority subdued. We can, he adds, be subject to God or to man, one man or more than one. If there be no superior authority over man, what is there to save us from the subjugation of powerful individuals? Unless we have some sacred and immutable law, which is not man-made, we can have no standard for discriminating between *right* and *wrong*. A government based on laws other than God's Will, he continues, produces the same result whether it be a despotic or a revolutionary one. Without God, whosoever be in authority will be a despot. Unless a government conforms to God's Law, it has no right to govern. The purpose of government is to enforce God's Will: if a government fails in its purpose, then it is your right and duty to try for and bring about a change.[23]

The idea of a "higher law" is not newly born. The ancient Greeks, among them Sophocles, Heraclitus, Plato and Aristotle, contributed much to the emergence and development of the concept of a Divinely inspired, universal, immutable and eternal natural law. They wrote, for example, that "all human laws are sustained by the one Divine Law, which is infinitely strong and suffices, and more than suffices, for them all" (Heraclitus). Plato's theory of human law as an imperfect replica of an ideal form that exists only in the world of Ideas, is another expression of much the same view. For Plato, and Greeks in general, the law of nature was no more than a basis of comparison—an intellectual standard—and did not serve as a means for concrete juridical decisions."[24] As stated by Corwin, "Aristotle was led to identify the rational with the general in human laws."

Putting the question in his *Politics* whether the rule of law or the rule of an individual is preferable, he answers his own enquiry in no uncertain terms. "To invest the law then with authority is, it seems, to invest God and reason only; to invest a man is to introduce a beast as desire is something bestial, and even the best of men in authority are liable to be corrupted by passion. We may conclude then that the law is reason without passion and it is, therefore, preferable to any individual."[25]

It remained, however, for the Stoics in Greece after 300 B.C., and later in Rome, to erect on this philosophical base an authentic natural law theory. Bracton, a judge of the King's Bench in the reign of Henry III, prepared a monumental work based on the study of Roman law. We find the following passage in his treatise which explains the view-point of the Romans in respect of law. It says:

> The King himself ought not to be subject to man but subject to God and to the law, for the law makes the King. Let the King then attribute to the law what the law attributes to him, namely dominion and power, for there is no King where the will and not the law has dominated.[26]

The point has, however, been stated very lucidly by Cicero, the great Roman jurist and orator, in a passage in the *Republic* which runs as follows:

> There is in fact a true law—namely right reason—which is in accordance with nature, applies to all men, and is unchangeable and eternal. By its commands, this law summons men to the performance of their duties; by its prohibitions it restrains them from doing wrong. . . . To invalidate this law by human legislation is never morally right, nor is it permissible ever to restrict its operation, and to annul it is impossible. Neither the Senate nor the people can absolve us from obligation to obey this law, and it requires no Sextus Aleius to expound or interpret it. It will not lay one rule at Rome and another at Athens, nor will it be one rule today and another tomorrow. But there will be one law, eternal and unchangeable, binding at all times upon all people; and there will be, as it were, one common master and ruler of men, namely God, who is the author of this law, its interpreter and its sponsor. The man who will not obey it will abandon his better self, and, in denying the true nature of man will thereby suffer the severest of penalties, though he has escaped all the other consequences which men call punishment.[27]

XIII. Modern Man in Search of Light

After centuries of unsuccessful experiments with man-made laws, modern man is still in search of the kind of laws which Cicero had so vehemently yearned for. The problem is where to find such laws—they are eternal, unchangeable, immutable, inviolable—applicable to all and at all times. The source would have to be supra-human, i.e., the laws given by God Himself. The West had naturally to seek the help of religion to ascertain such laws. They tried Christianity, but there was no response. Christianity has no laws to give, and it is all other-worldly. In the words of Joad:

> Christianity places man's true life not in this world but in the next. While the next world is wholly good this world is conceived to be, at least to some extent, evil; while the next life is eternal, life on earth is transitory. For man's life hereafter, this, his present existence, is to be regarded as a preparation and a training; and its excellence consists in the thoroughness and efficiency with which the training is carried out. Nothing on the earth is wholly and absolutely good, and such goods as earthly life contains are good only as a means to greater goods which are promised hereafter.[28]

The Spanish scholar, Dr. Falta de Gracia, writes:

> The notion of justice is as entirely foreign to the spirit of Christianity as is that of intellectual honesty. It lies wholly outside the field of its ethical vision.[29]

Prof. A.N. Whitehead writes:

> As society is now constituted, a literal adherence to the moral precepts scattered throughout the Gospels would mean sudden death.[30]

Dorsey, the historian of civilisation, has asserted that today millions of people feel that Christianity is the religion of the defeated. They accept the religion but admit solemnly its defeatist spirit. Nothing is satisfactory in life, they argue. "Desire for satisfaction is wrong and satisfaction of wrong desires is sin" is a slogan which makes a true and healthy life impossible. It destroys humanity.[31] The German humanist, Gerhard Szczesny, sees Christianity as a desert people's creed, basically

incompatible in its dualistic world-view with philosophy and science, and a brake on their progress for two thousand years.[32]

XIV. Declaration of Human Rights

The same is the case with other religions, both in the East and the West. It is in fact futile to seek in religion the laws of God for standard of absolute right and wrong. Religion itself is man-made. In these circumstances, the modern man, a frustrated, helpless pitiable soul, had perforce to seek objective standards outside the field of religion. He turned for help to the United Nations Organisation. The U.N.O., appointed a Commission to state and define the fundamental rights of man. On the basis of the recommendations of the Commission, the U.N.O., published, in 1948, its famous Declaration of Human Rights. This document listed the basic fundamental human rights. The U.N.O., asked its member states to guarantee them to all their subjects and to regard them as sacred and inviolable. The Declaration was hailed as the biggest achievement of the modern age. It was hoped that governments all over the world would, in future, desist from encroaching on these rights of man. This hope, unfortunately, has not been fulfilled. UNESCO, an organ of the U.N.O., had circulated a questionnaire on the draft of the proposed Declaration. The answers to the questionnaire have been published with an introduction by Jacques Maritain. His view is that "Rights, being human, should have some limits imposed on them and be regarded as liable to amendment and change" (p. 15). John Lewis, the editor of the *Modern Quarterly*, London, is equally outspoken in his criticism of the Declaration. He writes that it is mere fiction that "Human Rights" are absolute, or are inherent in human nature and came into being before man began living in organised society (p. 51). Gerard, a professor in the University of Chicago, writes that the Declaration is an attempt to determine the proper relationship between man and society and the "Rights" cannot be viewed as unalterable for all times to come (p. 20).

XV. Search for Permanent Values

Such criticism has considerably dampened our enthusiasm for the Declaration. The conviction that man possesses certain inalienable rights does not seem to be justified. If men possessed a common philosophy of life, they might be expected to respect the "rights" which that philosophy supports. In the absence of such a philosophy, there is no guarantee that the rights affirmed by one school of thought would be accepted by other schools of thought. The first condition to be fulfilled is an agreed system of values. Prof. Joad makes this clear:

> I suggested that the good life for the individual consists in the pursuit of certain absolute values. If I am right, if, that is to say, it is by the pursuit of values that a man develops his personality, we may add that the object of the State is to establish those conditions in which the individual can pursue absolute values and to encourage him in their pursuit. We are thus enabled to establish a principle of progress in society, which is also a standard of measurement whereby to assess the relative worths of different societies.[33]

Our first task, therefore, is to determine the nature of absolute values. We will then see that it is the duty of the state to provide conditions in which men can freely pursue them. Human Rights will then be brought into a significant relationship to the pursuit of values and will not be regarded as arbitrary. This task has not yet been undertaken. Let us see if Islam can help on this.

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POLITICAL SYSTEM

PART II

QUR'ĀNIC SYSTEM

I. Islamic View of Humanity

In an earlier chapter, we have given an exposition of the Islamic view of human personality. We have seen that essential worth of man lies in his self and not in his physical body. As far as the self is concerned all men are equal, however much they may differ in respects of caste, creed or race. This view gives full recognition to the dignity of man as man. The Qur'ān has expressed this view in lucid and unambiguous language:

> Verily, We have honoured every human being (17 : 70).

As human beings, all men are equal; every one possesses that precious jewel, the human self. This is the basic principle of the Islamic order of society.

It necessarily follows, therefore, that personality is an end in itself. No man has the right to exploit another man or to use him as a means in furthering his personal interests.* If society were organised on this basis, there would be neither rulers nor subjects. This is the second principle on which society in Islam is based. No man is permitted to compel others to obey him. God alone is to be obeyed through the Laws revealed by Him.

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* In defending slavery, Aristotle argued that some men are born slaves. They are, therefore, to be treated as chattels, i.e., used as tools as a crafts-man uses his tools. The Qur'ān, on the other hand, has categorically rejected such ideas and in restoring to man his lost dignity has struck the death blow to all forms of slavery. This point is argued further in the chapter on *Woman.*

It is not right for man that God should give him the Book of Law, power to judge and (even) *Nubuwwah*, and he should say to his fellow-beings to obey his orders rather than those of God. He should rather say: Be ye faithful servants of God by virtue of your constant teaching of the Book and your constant study of it (3 : 78).

The Qur'ān forbids man to arrogate to himself the right to judge and rule over other men; and yet it does not advocate a lawless anarchical society. What it does is to lay down the principle that all men are equal, and that God alone has the right to rule over them (12 : 40), and none has the right to any share in it (18 : 26). These principles make the frame work of the Islamic society.

God, however, is the Absolute, the transcendental Reality. How can we obey Him if we cannot contact Him? The answer is, by observing His Laws as given in the Qur'ān. This is why the *Rasūl* was asked to declare:

Shall I seek other than Allah for Judge, when He it is Who hath revealed unto you this Book fully explained (6 : 115).

The social part of the Divine Revelation provides us with laws intended to guide the course of social evolution. Islam has developed a political organisation based on eternal principles of the Qur'ān. Since these principles have their source not in the human intellect but in Divine Wisdom, men, when they obey them, are obeying God and not any mortal man or group of men. In the Islamic society all men are equal in the eyes of the law. It is a community of free and equal persons, owing allegiance to God and obeying His laws.

Here is another angle. We have seen that man has two selves, the real self and the physical self or body. The relationship between the two selves is close and intimate. But while the body is incessantly changing, permanence characterises the real self. The real self remains unchanged while the body changes. Since Islam is concerned with the entire person, it seeks to reconcile the two facts. Iqbal has clarified this point:

The ultimate spiritual basis of all life, as conceived by Islam, is eternal and reveals itself in variety and change. A society based on

such a conception of Reality, must reconcile in its life, the categories of permanence and change. It must possess eternal principles to regulate its collective life; for the eternal gives us a foothold in the world of perpetual change. But eternal principles, when they are understood to exclude all possibilities of change which, according to the Qur'an, is one of the greatest signs of God, tend to immobilise what is essentially mobile in its nature.[1]

The law laid down in the Qur'ān, though immutable, is dynamic in nature to cater both permanence and change:

Perfected is the Word of thy *Rabb* in truth and justice. There is naught that can change His words (6 : 116).

What this unalterable and eternal Law does is, it demarcates the boundary line of what is lawful—"limits" in the terminology of the Qur'ān—which no one has the right to transgress. Within the boundary line, however, we are free to frame such supplementary laws as the needs of the time require. These supplementary laws are, of course, subject to change and are to be enacted and revised by the representatives of the people "by mutual consultations" (42 : 38). Within the limits set by the Qur'ānic laws, Islam upholds free and unfettered democratic activity. The Qur'ān even leaves man free to devise his own consultative machinery. The form which consultations are to take will depend on the convenience of the people.

As regards the eternal and unalterable Law which sets a limit to the legislative activity of the Islamic democracy, the community, the *Ummah*, is fully committed to it. It cannot break from its moorings. No one can claim the right to deviate from the laws laid down in the Qur'ān for the guidance of the conduct of the Islamic State. No human being, or group of men, is infallible. We cannot rule out the possibility that majority, and even unanimous decisions, may be wrong. Such wrong decisions may not, however, do much harm if they leave the basis of the society untouched. If, however, the legislature is empowered to change the basis of society, its wrong decisions will have disastrous results for the

body politic. Social stability will be assured only if the legislature exercises its powers within the framework of permanent fundamental principles laid down by Qur'ān. If this framework is rejected, it will cease to be an Islamic society. Within this permanent framework, change is not only permissible but advisable. The conditions of life are always changing, and the constitution of the state and machinery of the government too, must, from time to time, be revised and brought up-to-date. It is obvious that in such a system permanence and change are reconciled. The Islamic society is both stable and progressive. It rests on the firm foundation of eternal principles but men are free to raise whatever superstructure they like on that foundation. To do good to others is an unalterable moral principle, but the way in which we can do good to others will depend on the particular circumstances of the time. The first cannot be left to the people, but the second should be decided by them. We must bear in mind that progress is a change that brings the system nearer to perfection. It is change which, while preserving the values achieved, adds to them and raises them to a higher level.

II. Universal Humanity

The Qur'ān affirms the unity of mankind and disapproves of any attempt to divide mankind into superior and inferior groups on the basis of colour, race, caste or creed. It tells us that "mankind is but one community" (2:213). Moreover, this unity is not regarded as springing from similarity of body structure but as having its source in the heart. Says the Qur'ān: "Your creation and your raising up are only as the creation and raising of a single self" (31: 28). The first and foremost task of an Islamic society is to preserve and enhance this unity. Short-sighted men, however, are tempted to adopt ways of living that tend to weaken it:

> The transgressors break the covenant of God, after the establishment thereof, and cut asunder what God has commanded to be joined (2:27).

The Qur'ān is eminently practical in its approach to life. It does not merely hold up an ideal which we are asked to admire and gaze upon. It shows the way in which the ideal can be realised in actual life. The unity of mankind which is real but invisible is to be made manifest through the effort of man. The first step in the unification of mankind was taken by Abraham (P). Before him, each tribe worshipped its own tribal god and believed in the tribal unity symbolised by its totem. Abraham (P) first built the House which was dedicated to the God of all and symbolised the unity of mankind. It was the first common platform for men:

> Lo! The first House built for *Mankind* was that at Mecca (3 : 95).

This House, the *Ka'bah*, was the visible symbol of peace and security for all men:

> And whosoever enters it, is safe (3 : 96).

The *Ka'bah* is not invested with any sanctity. It derives its importance from what it symbolises. The flag is the symbol of national unity; the sceptre is the symbol of kingly power. The *Ka'bah* is the symbol of the real unity of all mankind. Symbols are termed *sha'air-ullah* in the Qur'ān. The *Ka'bah* symbolises the unity of mankind as well as the universal political organisation which is adumbrated in the Qur'ān: "We made the House at Mecca a resort for *mankind* and a place of security" (2 : 125). In other words, it is to serve as the focus for all men dispersed over the surface of the earth.

The *Ka'bah* is intended to serve as the centre of the universal social order which the Qur'ān outlines. This order is marked by both the absence of *sharr* and the living presence of *khair*. The first aspect is stressed when the Qur'ān asserts that those who join the order will ever remain free from fear and will enjoy security. The second aspect is emphasised in this verse:

> God has made *Ka'bah* a foothold for mankind to stand upon (5: 97).

It means that through this social order, mankind will learn to stand independently and rise to higher levels. It

is to serve as the starting point for the continued development of man. This point is elaborated in the chapter, *Ḥajj* in the Qur'ān. Mecca is declared to be an open city. Admission into it and citizenship in it cannot be denied to any man. Says the Qur'ān:

> We have appointed Mecca as a place of security for mankind together, the dweller therein and the outsider (22 : 25).

Abraham (P) was enjoined to "proclaim unto *mankind* the *Ḥajj*" (22 : 27), so that all those who believe in the unity of mankind may gather together and make that unity a visible fact. This is what *Ḥajj* means. It will enable them to concentrate on their common interests and will widen the area of agreement, "that they may witness things that are of benefit to them" (22 : 28). Everybody is welcome to Mecca, the Home of all men:

> And a visit to this House is a duty unto Allah for mankind, for him who can find a way hither (3 : 96).

It is the duty of every man, then, to visit the House of Allah if he has the means and the will to do so. He alone will benefit by it and not Allah, since "Allah is independent of all creatures" (3 : 96).

The invitation to the House of Allah is extended to all men. By participating in this universal gathering, men become aware of their common interests, aims and ideals. It is not a "religious gathering." People who go there are expected to deliberate on all the problems that confront mankind and seek their solution in such a way that the path of progress is opened to man. It is incumbent on all who participate in this gathering of men dedicated to the service of man, to put away all narrow interests and think only of the good of humanity. The purpose of the *Ḥajj* can be fulfilled only when there is single-minded devotion to God and His creatures. Injustice, cruelty and parochial interests are detestable actions of *sharr* in any case, but these should be particularly abhorrent to men who visit Mecca, the symbol of real unity of mankind and its social, cultural and political centre. All men who believe in the unity of

God, and hence the unity of mankind, have the right to enter Mecca and contribute their mite to the furtherance of the cause of humanity and to the implementation of the Divine programme for man. *Mushrikīn* are not to be admitted to Mecca as they deny the unity of Law and, by implication, the unity of mankind. Hence the declaration on the day of the *Ḥajj-e-Akbar*, forbidding *mushrikīn* to enter the *Ka'bah* (9: 3 ; 28). *Mushrikīn*, according to the Qur'ān, are not only those who worship idols but also those who pursue unhuman ends. Those who cherish such motives cannot be loyal to God.

III. International Humanity

Islamic society is based on the equality of all men. Islam lays emphasis on the factors that unite mankind. As already stated, it disapproves of all divisions of mankind on the basis of colour, race, creed, language or territory. Such division cuts at the very root of unity. This is why the Qur'ān addresses the believers as constituting "the best community that hath been raised *for the benefit of mankind*" (3 : 109). In the second chapter of the Qur'ān, the *Ka'bah* is declared to be the centre of the social life of Islam as well as the symbol of its ideals. In the same chapter we are reminded of our duties to mankind in these words:

> And thus have We made you an international people that you may keep an eye on what mankind does (2 : 143).

The Muslim community, the *Ummah*, is thus entrusted with the task of leading mankind to its goal. It is enjoined to evolve a universal society on the basis of the absolute values affirmed in the Qur'ān. The steady moral and material progress of mankind as one family is thus assured. The institution of *Ḥajj* gathers men from all parts of the world in one place, Mecca. This truly international gathering provides a fine opportunity for devising a suitable programme for the unification of mankind in accordance with the principles laid down in the Qur'ān. All those who have the good of humanity

at heart can join hands to build up a society in which every individual has full scope for developing his potentialities. Abraham (P), the builder of the *Ka'bah*, was the first to summon mankind to this task. The Qur'ān rightly says of him that he was "appointed as a leader of mankind" (2 : 124).

IV. Freedom, Justice and Beauty

The need for the Qur'ānic order arises from the fact that in the absence of a universal way of life, mankind must remain divided into mutually hostile groups. Under such conditions, there can be no enduring peace, no permanent security for the individual and no prosperity and happiness in the world. The Qur'ān, for this reason, constantly draws attention to the unity of mankind, although conflict cannot be eliminated immediately:

> Had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and oratories and mosques, wherein the name of Allah is oft mentioned, would assuredly have been pulled down. Verily, Allah helpeth one who helpeth Him (22 : 40).

The urgent need for a political organisation which would embrace all humanity cannot be denied. The existing political systems only divide mankind into warring camps. Each group has devised a system which serves its own interests and gives support to its own ambitions. Each of the political ideologies is suited only to its authors but fails to serve others. The supremacy of a single group, racial, cultural or occupational is either implied or expressly affirmed in these ideologies. Nazism and Fascism defend the right of the stronger race to exploit the weaker one. Communism theoretically asserts the supremacy of the workers but practically places political power in the hands of the party. Democracy inculcates belief in the cultural superiority of the people of one state, and seeks to make them prosperous even at the expense of peoples of other states. The Qur'ān alone offers an ideology which can appeal to all men. Human equality and human worth are its corner stones. Its

goal is the uplift and unification of all mankind. It counters all attempts to break up mankind into groups. It dismisses the physical differences among men as of no consequence and treats as important what is basic in them and, therefore, common to all men. This is why the Qur'ān speaks of God as the *Rabb of all mankind* (1 : 1); of the *Rasūl* as "the fount of *Raḥmah* to all men" (21 : 107), and of its message as "a reminder for the whole world" (6 : 91).

V. *'Adl and Iḥsān*

We can now proceed to consider the principles of *'adl* and *iḥsān* that form the basis of the social order of Islam. Muslims are commanded never to deviate from the path af *'adl* and *iḥsān*—the Qur'ān says: "Verily Allah enjoins *'adl* and *iḥsān*" (16 : 91). By *'adl* is meant giving each man his due, and *iḥsān* means actively contributing to make good the deficiency of others to enable them to develop their personality without hindrance. The term *'adl* is not used in the strictly legal sense—justice. It is taken in the widest sense possible and assures to man not only his legal rights but fair and equitable treatment in all aspects of social life. Two principles have been laid down by the Qur'ān for the guidance of man. Firstly that no one shall carry another's burden (53 : 38), and secondly that everyone will be entitled to get according to his efforts (53 : 39). It means that in the Islamic Order, man is punished or rewarded for his own deeds and is held responsible for his voluntary acts. Nobody is to be deprived of the fruit of his labour, nor is he to appropriate to himself what somebody else has earned. If these principles are sincerely believed in and conscientiously acted upon, there will be an end to all exploitation and injustice.

Again, the Qur'ān enjoins us to be strictly just in our dealings with even our enemies. In this matter we have no right to discriminate between friend and foe. The Qur'ān is explicit on this point:

> O ye who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not enmity of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly; that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah (5 : 8).

We should always act justly, even when regard for justice is detrimental to our own interests:

> O ye who believe! Be ye staunch in justice; witnesses for Allah, even though it be against your own selves, or your parents, or your kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man, for Allah is nearer unto both (than ye are). So follow not passion lest ye lapse (from truth), nor ye distort truth or turn aside, verily God is well informed of what ye do (4 : 135).

Devotion to justice means much more than being just ourselves. We should also see to it that justice prevails everywhere. It is the duty of the Muslims to fight against injustice wherever and in whatever form it raises its head. Here the question naturally arises: how are we to fight against injustice? The answer is that as far as it is possible, we should fight injustice by peaceful means, such as persuasion and rational argument. Only when all these efforts fail, are we justified in resorting to force. At this point we face the question of war and its causes.

VI. War and Ideological Differences

Can war be abolished, and if so how? Is war ever justified and if so when? The Qur'ān's attitude to these questions is eminently realistic. While denouncing war as an evil, the Qur'ān concedes that it may be necessary as long as "it does not lay down its weapons" (47 : 4). If the peaceful people of a country are attacked by an aggressive ruthless enemy, the only honourable course of action for them is to fight in self-defence. The physical force of the enemy must be overcome by a combination of physical and moral forces. When successful resistance has put the enemy into a reasonable frame of mind, the way will be open for a peaceful solution of the dispute. Islam permits the use of force for the purpose of self-defence, for the protection of places of worship of all religions, for the eradication of injustice, cruelty and

tyranny, and lastly, for preventing a war, more frightful and on a larger scale.*

Islam's attitude to the question of the abolition of war is cautious and realistic. Abolition of war should be our goal but we should realise that it can be attained only gradually. The Qur'ān offers concrete proposals which, if carried out, will lead to the exclusion of war from the world. Firstly, men should be persuaded to accept the view that as rational beings, it befits them to settle all their disputes and compose all their differences in a peaceful and rational manner. Secondly, steps should be taken to eliminate the causes which lead to war. The main causes for war are ideological differences. War often breaks out because a powerful nation tries to impose its religious beliefs or political ideology on other nations. The Qur'ān forbids compulsion in any form in matters of belief. Man should be free to choose his own way of life; it should not be forced on him. The Qur'ān emphatically says: "There is no compulsion in the matter of *dīn*" (2 : 256). Man is free in the sphere of *dīn*. Freedom and compulsion do not and cannot go together. No one has the right to force Islam on others. A Muslim equally cannot be compelled to remain within the fold of Islam. It is for the individual to reject or accept it as he likes:

> Say: (it is) the truth from the *Rabb* of you all. Then, whosoever will, let him believe and whosoever will, let him reject (18 : 29).

It is not only physical compulsion that is forbidden, but all irrational methods of winning adherents to Islam. It is wrong to induce people to embrace Islam through suggestion, false propaganda or promise of monetary gain or political power; whoever accepts Islam should do so freely, rationally and of his own accord. The Qur'ān, therefore, repeatedly assured the men of the time that the *Rasūl* did not rely on miracles but only on the intrinsic value of his message. He consistently refused to take advantage of the credulity of the people:

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* The question about war has been dealt with in detail in the next chapter.

And if thy *Rabb* willed, all who are in the world would have believed together. What? Wilt thou (O Muḥammad) then compel so that they may believe? (10 : 99).

The Qur'ān treats all humanity as a single family (2 : 213), and is, therefore, opposed to the division of mankind into groups. The only division it recognises is one based on ideology. The first group is composed of those who believe in the absolute values set forth in the Qur'ān. The other group consists of those who deny and reject the absolute values. This is the only basis of division. The believers and unbelievers naturally fall apart into separate groups. The believers are united in God and are dedicated to the pursuit of permanent values. The unbelievers lack faith in God and absolute values, and consequently faith in their own high destiny.

The Qur'ān, however, does not treat those who do not subscribe to the ideals of Islam as "untouchables." Their rights are regarded as sacred. The Muslims are enjoined to protect the rights of the non-Muslims with the same zeal that they show in safeguarding the interests of the Muslims. It is noteworthy that the Islamic Social Order seeks to provide the non-Muslims with all the means they need for development. It is as much concerned with the welfare and well-being of the non-Muslims as it is with that of the Muslims. They (the Muslims) say:

We feed you for the sake of Allah (i.e., as a duty which Allah has laid on us). We wish for no reward nor thanks from you (76 : 9).

An allegation is often made to the effect that discrimination is made by an Islamic State between Muslims and non-Muslims living within its domain by requiring the latter to pay a special tax, called *Jizyah*. This is utterly wrong and based on a grave misunderstanding of the correct position. When the first Islamic State was established by Muḥammad (P), some smaller non-Muslim states were, as a result of their rebellious attitude, subjugated, but, instead of occupying their territory, they were granted full autonomy and were assured of complete protection against outside aggression. As a token of their allegiance to the Islamic State, and in

return for the military protection afforded to them, they paid a nominal tribute called *Jizyah*. This word occurs in the Qur'ān only once (in 9 : 29) and, according to *Lane's Lexicon*, means "a compensation for the protection afforded." There are cases on record in history in which the Islamic State returned the amount of *Jizyah* when it was unable to afford protection to the non-Muslim state concerned.

Islam endeavoured to promote mutual understanding and co-operation between Muslims and non-Muslims. Its aim was to build a classless unified society based on permanent values. Says the Qur'ān :

> Help one another in *birr* and *taqwa*, and help not one another in *ithm* and *'udwān* (5 : 2).

The Islamic State, therefore, strongly advocates international co-operation in all undertakings that are likely to promote the welfare of mankind.

VII. Sectarianism

Because of its preoccupation with the unity of mankind, the Qur'ān is naturally opposed to sectarianism in *dīn* and factionalism in politics. Sects and factions breed strife and dissension in the *Ummah*. According to the Qur'ān, sectarianism is a form of *shirk* :

> And be not of *Mushrikīn*, i.e., of those who split up their *dīn* and become schismatics, each sect rejoicing in whatever they have. (30 : 31-32).

The *Nabi* is advised to have no truck with those who divide Muslims into sects :

> Lo ! as for those who sunder their *dīn* and become schismatics, no concern at all thou hast with them (6 : 160).

We are further warned :

> And be ye not as those who separated and disputed after clear proofs had come unto them. For such there is an awful doom (3 : 104 ; 11 : 118).

There is little justification for political parties. Each party's ostensible claim to defend political freedom is in fact an excuse for capturing political power and use it for its own benefit. There is no room for such political parties in an *Ummah* which is dedicated to the ideals of establishing the Divine Order of justice and of welding the different factions of man into a single progressive society which would permit every individual to live a creative life, developing all his potentialities and latent powers. This is the life worthy of man. As the Qur'ān says :

> That is the right way of life (30 : 30).

Western nationalism has proved to be a fertile source of war and conflict. Under it and its offshoot, colonialism, millions of men in Asia and Africa have suffered the humiliation of subjugation and the misery of exploitation. Nationalism is the main obstacle in the way of unification of mankind. How is the virus of nationalism to be checked? Let us see what Murray thinks of nationalism :

> The religion of nationalism is diabolical. Whether it possesses Germans, Russians, Japanese, Americans or Englishmen, it appears as the supreme exaltation of the Selfhood—the religion of Satan, the Prince of this world. To it today all large-scale religions are subservient. Christianity in all its forms . . . except that professed by the small minority which repudiates Nationalism . . . . is submerged in the satanic religion of Nationalism. Therefore, religion on the grand scale can provide no escape from our misery. As veritable and universal religion, commanding an allegiance that overrides the claims of Nationalism, it does not exist. In its tacit and unholy combination with Nationalism, it sanctifies the chief cause of our misery. If religion is essential for our salvation . . . . it must, first, be a religion which compels from the person an allegiance which completely overrides the claims of Nationalism ; and secondly it must be a religion which enlarges and strengthens man's capacity to act as an individual.[2]

The sort of "religion" Mr. Murray yearns for does exist. One has only to have a close look at Islam. Western thinkers disillusioned with Christianity, turn to internationalism as an effective antidote to the poison of nationalism. For a short time, it was believed that the League of Nations would usher in an era of peace and

friendship between the nations of the world. It was seen as the first step towards the establishment of a world order. The League failed and the world was again convulsed by another war. At the end of the Second World War, statesmen of the West, in a desperate bid to avert another war, established the U.N.O. Will the U.N.O., succeed where the League failed ? Emery Reves is rather pessimistic about it :

> We have played long enough with the toy of inter-nationalism. The problem we are facing is not a problem between nationalisms. It is a problem of a crisis in human society, caused by nationalism, and which consequently nationalism or internationalism can never solve.[3]

What is needed is universalism. A creed and a movement for creating a system of values which transcends the nation-state structure. Reves goes on to say :

> To put it bluntly, the meaning of the crisis of the twentieth century is that this planet must to some degree be brought under unified control. Our task, our duty, is to attempt to institute this unified control in a democratic way, by first proclaiming its principles and to achieve it by persuasion and with the least possible bloodshed. If we fail to accomplish this, we can be certain that the iron law of history will compel us to wage more and more wars with more and more powerful weapons against more and more powerful groups, until unified control is finally attained through conquest.[4]

The political organisation proposed by Reves, as the only solution to the problem which confronts the world, is not dissimilar to the Islamic Social Order described above. We quote from another political thinker, F. Hertz, whose views will be found to be of great interest :

> It is now generally recognised that a mere machinery of international organisation cannot work if the right spirit is lacking. But how can this spirit be created or strengthened. The proclamation of general principles obviously is not enough. Neither is it sufficient to lay down that nations must be educated towards that spirit, if a practicable plan and an adequate number of qualified educators are not available. The habit of treating such questions in an unrealistic and perfunctory way is bound to lead to failure, disillusionment and cynicism. Education towards world citizenship, moreover is not merely a matter for the schools. It is connected with all the great issues of political and economic life and could only be solved if the

political nations of the world would adopt detailed plans based on identical principles.[5]

Prof. Cobban has expressed the same view :

> The solution to which we are apparently forced is the creation of a world state.[6]

Laski appealed for the establishment of "a universal social order which shall be composed of members hailing from the four corners of the earth."[7]

W.A. Gould is thinking on the same lines as the following quotation shows :

> That our primary concern should be for 'home and country' is natural and proper but we cannot escape the implications of membership in world society.[8]

Again :

> So far there has been little enough evidence of a generally felt sense of international unity embracing all mankind. It is too early yet to hope for this ; but that particular groups of individuals in various countries have it in a very practical degree, is the guarantee that in due time the active experience of world co-operation may be more widely shared.[9]

The more deeply modern thinkers probe into the situation the more convinced they become of the fact that the ultimate salvation of mankind lies in moulding the entire humanity into one single community. Warren Wagar has recently published an informative book the very title of which, *The City of Man*, suggests the theme he discusses. He has quoted extensively contemporary historians, scientists, theologians, thinkers, statesmen etc., of international fame prophesying the establishment of a world order before long. The chapter *World Government* in his book opens with the remarks :

> If it is the "ultimate question" before mankind, world government is also the most thoroughly explored aspect of the nascent world civilization in recent books on world problems. Predicting or proposing a world constitution was for several years during and after the Second World War a major national pastime of especially the English-speaking intelligentia. In the late 1940's the world government movement fathered about seventy organized groups around the world which enrolled hundreds of thousands of members. Nearly one

quarter of the members of the American Congress and the British Parliament gave continuing support for years to resolutions favouring, in principle, a world federal government. Herbert J. Muller, at the close of his best-selling book *The Uses of the Past*, published in 1952, could reach "the commonplace conclusion" that man's best hope lay in "some kind of world federation on a democratic basis." H. Stuart Hughes in his *Essay for Our Times* spoke of "the solid and now familiar conviction that every nation must transfer the essentials of its sovereignty to a world authority." For Norman Cousins, world government was simply "coming." It was "inevitable. No arguments for it or against it can change that fact." Prominent elder statesmen, scientists as famous as Albert Einstein, philosophers as famous as Bertrand Russell, churchmen, civic leaders, school children: the chorus grew until it seemed, for a brief deceptive moment, irresistible (p. 32).

Gunner Myrdal writes in *Beyond the Welfare State*:

Clearly, the complete realisation of our ideals would create a world without boundaries and without national discrimination, a world where all men are free to move around as they wish and to pursue on equal terms their own happiness. Politically, the implication would be a world state, democratically ruled by the will of all peoples. Somewhere in the religious compartment of our souls we all harbour . . . . this vision of a world in perfect integration (p. 163).

Pitirim Sorokin is of the opinion that "as part of a vast ensemble of social and cultural changes necessary for the elimination of war, some sort of world government is indispensable."[10] Hugh Miller of the University of California writes:

Civilisation must recover the kinship of that association which originally established man on Earth, and which was then temporarily dispersed into clan and tribe and race. . . . . Civilisation is mankind made kin again, and kind. (The next step in man's evolution must be) a world society embracing mankind in which all the traditional cultures are woven into the great society of the future.[11]

Teilhard de Chardin—"a mystic, a theist, a Jesuit, a scientist, an evolutionary humanist and a prophet of world order"—says:

There is only one way which leads upwards; the one which through greater organisation, leads to greater synthesis and unity. (The human consciousness must expand beyond) the broadening, but still far too restricted, circles of family, country and race. The Age

of Nations is past. The task before us now, if we would not perish, is to shake off our ancient prejudices, and to build the Earth.[12]

Arnold Toynbee, the great historian, also visualises a world order "in which the whole of mankind will be able to live together in harmony, as members of a single all-inclusive family."[13]

He elaborates this point in his small, yet very elucidating book, *The Present Day Experiment in Western Civilisation*, (1962), saying :

If we avoid committing mass-suicide, there is no reason why we should not eventually be able to have a world-state with a democratic parliamentary constitution. But if we *are* to avoid mass-suicide, we must have our world-state quickly, and this probably means that we must have it in a non-democratic constitutional form to begin with. Parliamentary government—and, *a fortiori*, democratic parliamentary government—is practicable only in a community whose members have a number of things in common—common political principles deriving from a common outlook that derives, in turn, from a common way of life. The different races, nations, civilisations, and religions of the present-day world are still far indeed from having even approached this degree of homogeneity and solidarity (p. 67).

And this is exactly what the Qur'ān emphasised fourteen hundred years ago when it said :

Mankind is but one single community (2 : 213 ; 10 : 19).

The social order laid down by the Qur'ān is the practical means to integrate mankind into one harmonious community. Such is the religion which Erich Fromm looks forward to appear within the next few hundred years,

a religion which corresponds to the development of the human race ; the most important feature of such a religion would be its universalistic character, corresponding to the unification of mankind which is taking place in this epoch ; it would embrace the humanistic teachings common to all great religions of the East and the West. . . . . It will be the first fully human religion in history.[14]

According to Wagar :

A rational, ethical, practical faith, in harmony with science and enabling man at last to live in harmony with himself and the cosmos.[15]

The world need not wait for hundred years for such a "religion" to appear : it is already there preserved in the words of the Qur'ān. The difficulty is that it has not been presented to the world in its true colour. And for this, we confess, the blame lies on us—the custodians of that Book.

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Chapter XV

MAN AND WAR

I. The Distant Past

HUMAN characteristics are baffling in their complexity and contradictions. Man's capacity for ennoblement is equalled only by his capacity for debasement. He can rise to heights of sublimity but also sinks to the lowest depths of degradation. He may adore God with a fervour which is truly angelical; on the other hand, he may take devilish delight in debauchery and sensuality. If he can rise to heights of spiritual grandeur in love and can even die for his beloved, he can also hate like a beast of the jungle. Endowed with an intelligence which can explore interstellar spaces and can weigh the sun and the earth, he may remain ignorant of his own worth and latent powers and foolishly follow a path that will surely lead to the extermination of the human race.

War has been with man throughout his existence on this planet. As far as our eye can penetrate the haze of the distant past, we see men fighting each other. Despite the splendid civilisation he has created, and despite his glorious achievements in art and science, one wonders whether a being so busy with destroying his kind deserves to be called human. It is true that from time to time great men have appeared who have held aloft the banner of peace, tolerance and fellowship, but equally prominent men have as often preached the opposite gospel and glorified war. To Nietzsche, fighting was a noble occupation. "Men should be educated for war," he counselled, "and women for the production of

warriors," and adds, to make his meaning clear, "everything else is folly." Mussolini looked upon war as a moral necessity. Hitler regarded war as the basic principle of life. For him law was only that which a soldier laid down. In his view, only those who help the state to prepare for war really contribute to national culture and social well-being. "We should demolish," says Heinrich Hauser, "all those institutions which safeguard peace and security for man. Life will be stable and simple only in an age we call barbaric."

Although such extreme views are now generally despised and ridiculed, there are still many influential persons today who would not hesitate to plunge the world in war to settle an international dispute: fortunately they are restrained by the sober men in every country. They are also deterred by the prospect of nuclear war which would spell the annihilation of the victor and vanquished alike.

It is a fact that the menace of war has not receded from the present world. The policy of brinkmanship practised by some heads of states poses a threat to mankind. It is strange that modern man who aspires to colonise the moon and other planets cannot solve the problems that confront him on earth.

Let us see whether the Qur'ān can help us in this predicament. Does it offer any effective remedy for our social malaise? If so, how can the remedy be applied? The Qur'ān ascribes two significant attributes to God—*As-Salām* and *Al-Mu'min*. *As-Salām* is the Being Who is the source of peace and concord and Who assures peaceful existence to all beings. *Al-Mu'min* is the Being Who shelters and protects all and bestows peace in every sphere of life on all beings. Moreover, the way of life which the Qur'ān prescribes for us is called Islam, which basically means peace.

The *Mu'min* is the man whose life exemplifies peace. The Qur'ān refers to itself as the means by which the paths of peace are made wider (5 : 16). It summons men

to the "house of peace" (10 : 25). The reward for living in accordance with its tenets is "the abode of peace" (6 : 128). Peace reigns in the society of *Mu'mins*. When they depart from this world, the *malāikah* receive them with the salutation : "Because of the steadfastness with which you worked on earth in the cause of peace, there is for you here a reward of peace and safety" (13 : 24). An ardent desire for peace is reflected in the words in which one Muslim greets another. "Peace be on you" he says to his friend, and receives the joyful answer, "and peace be on you too." The Qur'ān applies the term *fasād* to any disturbance of social peace. It is hateful to God (2 : 205). God commands men not to cause dissension or commit violence in the world (7 : 56). Of the believers it is said that they do not breed mischief and violence (28 : 83).

It is thus clear that Islam is a staunch supporter of peace and that mischief and violence, in any form, are repugnant to it. It seeks to establish universal peace and to assure security to all peace-loving people.

It is no doubt true that human beings, by and large, wish to live in peace. Nevertheless, the outbreak of violence is by no means a rare phenomenon. The Qur'ān offers us sensible advice on how we can check violence when it breaks out. If an individual disturbs the peace we can try persuasion and if it fails, the government will have to intervene and restrain him by force. However, the problem is much more difficult when a nation commits aggression against another nation.

II. *Christianity and War*

Christianity favours the policy of non-resistance to evil. We are advised by it not to return evil for evil, not to meet violence with violence. The New Testament tells us that the proper answer to an act of violence is an act of love :

> Ye have heard that it hath been said,
> An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth :

But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain (St. Mathew, 5 : 38-41).

To do good in return for evil is said to be the best way to fight evil. No doubt, these are noble sentiments and in the personal lives of individuals may be praiseworthy. But it is doubtful if Jesus (P) could have taught these precepts for universal behaviour ; for experience does not prove their wisdom. They hold good in rare instances only, and *Anbiya* do not speak for rare exceptions. The history of Christianity too negates their authenticity. Dean Inge's comment on this way of combating evil deserves careful consideration :

The principle of non-resistance was laid down for a little flock in a hostile environment. But an organised society cannot abstain from the use of coercion. No one would suggest that a Christian Government must not suppress a gang of criminals within its own borders, and if this is admitted, can we doubt that it should defend itself against an invading enemy? . . . . Augustine held that war is justified in repelling wanton and rapacious attacks and that in preventing such crimes we are acting in the true interest of the aggressor. Without justice what is empire but brigandage on a large scale. . . . . Allowing that circumstances may arise which make a defensive war inevitable we have found a principle which will guide us in concrete cases.[1]

Even in the New Testament, as it exists today, there are statements here and there which are clearly at variance with the creed of non-violence and absolute non-resistence to evil. For example Christ (P) is reported as saying :

Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law (St. Mathew, 10 : 34-35).

It is obvious that the use of force to defend a good cause is not ruled out in Christianity.

In our own time, "Mahatma" Gandhi of India was believed to be a staunch and uncompromising supporter of the creed of non-violence. He too, had to tone down his idealism and adopt a more realistic attitude to evil:

> If an open warfare were a possibility, I may concede that we may tread the path of violence that the other countries have, and at best evolve the qualities that bravery on the battle field brings forth.[2]

This apostle of *ahimsa* even goes so far as to admit that when the need arises, not only men but also women will have to resort to violence and meet force with force.[3] It is needless to add that the followers of this *rishi* have resorted to violence whenever it suited their purpose.

III. Qur'ān and War

The Qur'ān never appeals to the passing emotions of man nor does it stoop to humour him. It faces the problems of life in a realistic manner and offers practical solutions for them. Like the New Testament, it advises us to do good in return for evil, for such actions are likely to have a wholesome effect on the evil-doer. Our moral worth, too, will be enhanced thereby:

> Return a bad act by one that is beautiful and good. It may be that he, between whom and you there is enmity, becomes your bosom friend (41 : 34).

In another place, a *mu'min* is described as "one who repels wrong with right" (28 : 54). But if the enemy takes mean advantage of such goodness, the Qur'ān permits the use of force, provided it is in accordance with the requirements of justice. While permitting force in such cases, the Qur'ān advises us to be lenient towards the man who has wronged us. If he repents, he is to be forgiven. The Qur'ān exhorts us to forgive our enemies and those who have wronged us:

> But he who forgives and makes peace (with his adversary), his reward devolves upon God (42 : 40).

The Qur'ān applies the term "*ẓālim*" (cruel, oppressive) to those who do not forgive their enemies. In another

place, however, the Qur'ān concedes to man the right to demand that his enemy should make amends for the wrong he had done and failing that he should be punished. Those who are unjust and cruel to their fellow-beings are denounced by the Qur'ān. Such men deserve dire punishment (42 : 41-42). The Qur'ān, however, inculcates in man that it is a noble thing to forgive. It asks us to forgive the man who has done us injury, whenever we have grounds for believing that such forgiveness will do good to the wrong doer as well as to society.

IV. Law and the Use of Force

The mere enactment of good laws, the Qur'ān asserts, is not enough to ensure peace in the world. It is necessary that the laws should be properly enforced :

> We sent Our messengers with clear arguments and with these Our laws and the criterion of justice so that man may establish himself in justice; and with it We have also created steel wherein is mighty power and many other uses for mankind (57 : 25).

In other words, law which is not backed by force is no more than pious advice. Law must be enforced if the social order is to be maintained. The Qur'ān, therefore, is in favour of the state maintaining sufficient power to enforce its laws. If the Qur'ān calls God *As-Salam*, the source of peace, it also applies to Him the terms, Protector, the Mighty, the Compeller, and the Self-reliant. The state should reflect these attributes as well.

The power vested in the state should be used to maintain law and order and as a defence against those who threaten its independence. The state is not to use its powers to curtail the freedom of individual. The purpose for which the state exists is to maintain conditions in which the individual can develop and achieve self-realisation. This purpose is fulfilled only when the state is fully independent and prepared to meet aggression from any quarter :

Make ready for your opponents all you can of armed forces and of horses tethered, that thereby you may dismay the enemy of Allah and your enemy and others beside them whom you know not (8 : 60).

The state should not use its power to oppress the weaker nations. It should use its power to create conditions in which the way of life ordained by God can be followed. The first battle fought by the Muslims exemplifies the right use of force.

The *Rasūl* and a small band of his devoted followers lived in Mecca for thirteen years. During this time they suffered all kinds of persecution with patience and humility. Every insult or act of violence was received in silence or at the most it evoked a gentle protest. But their self-imposed restraint was mistaken for weakness and every day they suffered outrages. When oppression became intolerable, they left their ancestral home and sought refuge in Madina, a town several hundred miles away from Mecca. Even here they were not left in peace. Their enemies were determined to compel them to renounce the new creed or to exterminate them if they refused to do so. A formidable force marched against them. For the refugees it was a question of life and death. Even then they hesitated to meet force with force. They patiently waited for Divine guidance, that they might do which was right. They were at last permitted to resort to force and give battle to their implacable enemies :

And whoso defendeth himself after he hath suffered wrong . . . . for such there is no way of blame against them (42 : 41).

A clear directive is given in the following verses :

Permission is given to those who are fought against (to fight) for that they have been wronged ; and verily God has the power to help them :

Those who have been driven from their homes unjustly only because they said : "Our *Rabb* is Allah." For had it not been for Allah's repelling some men by means of others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and (all other) places of worship, wherein the name of God is oft mentioned would assuredly have been pulled down. And God will certainly help him who helps Him. Verily Allah is strong, mighty (22 : 39-40).

We can conclude from these verses that only those who are persecuted and are not allowed to live in peace are justified in having recourse to war. The question arises, what are they to do if they do not possess the means to defend themselves? In such a case, the Qur'ān commands all righteous men to hasten to their rescue and fight on their behalf:

> How should ye not fight for the cause of Allah and of the feeble among men and of the women and the children who are crying: "Our *Rabb*! Bring us forth from out of this town whose people are oppressors. Oh, give us from before Thee some protecting friend! Oh, give us from before Thee some defender!"
>
> Those who believe do battle for the cause of Allah, and those who disbelieve do battle for the cause of *Taghūt*. So fight the minions of *Shaitān*. Lo! the *Shaiṭān's* strategy is ever weak (4 : 75-76).

The meaning is clear. Oppressed people, all over the world pray for a helper to rescue them, for a defender to fight for them. Do you not hear the cry of the oppressed? Or, do you think that, being secure yourself, there is no need for you to fight? You are wrong. It is your duty to hasten to the help of all who are groaning under oppression. It is your duty to fight against cruelty and injustice, even if the victims do not profess the values and concepts you profess and do not belong to your country or race. From wheresoever comes the cry of the oppressed, thither you should hasten and fight against the oppressor. This is what war "in the name of Allah" means.

The *Mu'mins* fight in the cause of Allah against cruelty, tyranny and injustice. Their purpose is to make justice prevail in the world. The unbelievers fight to subdue other people and exploit them for their own ends. The Qur'ān tells us in simple and direct language when war is justified and when it is not. The principles laid down by the Qur'ān are clear and definite. They are not couched in language which may be susceptible to different interpretations. The distinction between a just and an unjust war is clear and should not be blurred by sophistical arguments. For example, people, if they are really persecuted, have a right to rebel against the

government of their country. However, they would be acting directly against the Qur'ānic principles if they magnified any petty grievance and called it persecution. They may be said to be the victims of persecution only if the basic rights, defined by the Qur'ān, are denied to them. The *Mu'min* will take up arms only to defend these rights, and he will hasten to help the oppressed, whether Muslim or non-Muslim.

V. Rules of Conduct

So far about the conditions under which war is permissible. Let us now consider the rules of conduct laid down by the Qur'ān for Muslims when they are at war. In the first place the duty to be just in one's dealings with others is as binding in war as it is in peace:

> O you who believe! Be steadfast witnesses for Allah in equity, and let not enmity of any people seduce you that ye deal not justly. Deal justly, that is nearer to your duty. Observe your duty to Allah, Lo! Allah is well informed of what ye do (5 : 8).

We should be just even to our enemies. The Qur'ān does not permit us to deviate from the path of justice in any circumstances. If an oppressor has deprived human beings of their basic rights, justice demands that those rights should be restored to them. As far as possible, it should be done by peaceful means. Only when these fail, recourse may be had to war. But even in war, we should respect the basic rights of the enemy. When the enemies have been vanquished they should be treated with consideration as human beings.

Secondly, the Qur'ān emphatically declares that a treaty ought to be honoured always, in war as well as in peace. The peace of the world depends, above all things, on the trust placed in treaties. A treaty has value only as long as there is mutual trust. Can it command any respect if either of the parties subscribe to the view that all is fair in war? The stronger party could repudiate it whenever it suited its purpose. That is why Solon says that a treaty is a spider's web which entangles him who

is weaker than it, and it is not worth a straw for one who is stronger.

Machiavelli stoutly defended unscrupulous dealings in politics. He advises the ruler, in plain terms, to break his faith whenever it suits his purpose :

> A prudent ruler ought not to keep faith when by so doing it would be against his interest and when the reasons which made him bind himself no longer exist.[4]

His disciple, Frederick II, believed that:

> Policy consists rather in profiting by favourable conjunctures than by preparing them in advance. This is why I counsel you not to make treaties depending upon uncertain events, and to keep your hands free.[5]

Long before Machiavelli, a political thinker in India had set forth similar doctrines. The appellation *Kautilya* (cunning) which was applied to him shows that he defended the use of craft in politics. He believed that only a crafty and unscrupulous man can play the game of politics successfully. In his *Arthashastra*, he writes to the effect that treaties have no sanctity and can be twisted or broken according to the necessity of the moment. However, he counsels the ruler to do this with such cunning that neither his own people nor his opponents suspect him of violating the treaty.

In direct opposition to this glorification of expediency, the Qur'ān categorically asserts:

> Fulfil your bonds (5 : 1).

It reminds us that we are not only answerable to those to whom we have pledged our word, but also to Allah. Allah commands that we should keep our pledges:

> Fulfil your pledges: Remember, you will be asked about your pledges (17 : 34).

What, however, is to be done if the other party breaks the treaty? The common view is that in such a case, the treaty automatically becomes null and void. Not so with the Qur'ān. It deprecates a hasty act and counsels us to appeal to the enemy to reconsider their decision and

honour the treaty. Only when this appeal has proved to be vain and the enemy persists in violating the treaty are we justified in regarding it as no longer binding on us:

> If you fear treachery anyway at the hands of a people then throw back to them (their treaty) fairly and thus dissolve it with them equally: Surely Allah loves not the treacherous (8 : 58).

In the early days of Islam, when the Qur'ānic law was invariably obeyed, the violation of treaty by Muslims was unthinkable. Even if the pledge was given by an individual Muslim, it was invariably honoured. An incident which occured during the battle of Badr, illustrates the attitude of the *Rasūl* to the pledged word of a Muslim. At this battle, three hundred and thirteen Muslims were opposed by a strong force of over a thousand men. The odds were against them and they would have welcomed any addition to their number. When the fighting was going on and the issue was still uncertain, two armed men suddenly appeared and joined battle on their behalf. The *Rasūl* enquired of them, how they had managed to pass through the enemy's land. They replied that they had tried to stop them, but were allowed to go on after pledging their word that they would not take up arms against them. The *Rasūl* said that the pledged word must be honoured. He commanded them not to fight, saying that the issue of the battle will be settled according to the Laws of God. Even at this critical juncture he did not allow his men to break their premise.

A piquant situation arose when some pagan women embraced Islam but their husbands remained faithful to the old faith. The husbands began to persecute their wives to compel them to renounce Islam. Some of these women sought refuge in Medina. The Muslims were asked to return the wives to their lawful husbands. The Islamic Law does not sanction the marriage of a Muslim woman to a pagan. Therefore, the women were told that they were free and would not be forced to return to their husbands. But their husbands were repaid whatever money they had given to their wives or spent on them

(60 : 10). Be it noted that these men were the sworn enemies of Islam and were bent on destroying the little band of Muslims. Even from these enemies the *Rasūl* would not withhold what was in justice due to them. This zeal for justice and fair dealing could not but impress the opponents of Islam.

Finally, if the enemies offer peace, in no case should such an offer be rejected. It may be that the Muslims have just grounds for suspecting the motives of the enemy but their suspicions should not prevent them from accepting the offer of peace. It may be that offer is made when victory is within the reach of the Muslims. Even then they should not continue war but should lay down arms and start negotiations for concluding peace. If the enemy has been forced to sue for peace, the purpose of the war has been fulfilled. The purpose was not to subjugate the enemy or seize their territory, but to repel the attack. If, for whatever reason, the enemy shows willingness to lay down arms, the Muslims should do likewise. The enemies may have made the offer of peace merely to gain time or to mask some nefarious design. Even so, the Muslims are commanded to place their trust in God and accept it in good faith, "for God is sufficient for you. He it is Who supports you with His help and with the believers" (8 : 62). All necessary precautions, however, should be taken and the enemy made to vacate his aggression, but the offer should not be spurned merely on suspicion of ulterior motives.

How long should the war be continued if the enemies refuse to come to terms? The Qur'ān enjoins the Muslims to continue the war till the purpose for which it was undertaken is fulfilled. When the purpose has been accomplished, the war should be ended forthwith. Unwarranted aggression, persecution of a religious group, oppression and the denial of human rights are some of the reasons which justify war.

If the war cannot be ended but the belligerents can agree to a temporary cessation of hostilities, the opportunity should immediately be seized. During the pause

in fighting, tempers may be calmed, passions cooled and sober thinking and heart-searching may create the atmosphere in which an amicable settlement of the dispute may be possible. Nowadays, the term cease-fire is applied to such temporary arrangements. This method of terminating a war was recommended by the Qur'ān fourteen centuries ago. Another step in the same direction was to establish an international convention to the effect that fighting should be forbidden during certain months (9 : 36).

VI. Prisoners of War

The Qur'ān enjoins humane and compassionate treatment of prisoners of war. In those days in Arabia as elsewhere, prisoners of war were usually made bond-slaves. Men and women taken in war were sold as slaves. Nowhere was this practice regarded as objectionable. The Qur'ān, with its insistence on the worth of the human self, could not sanction such an outrage on human dignity. It commanded Muslims to adopt other ways of dealing with prisoners of war. The directive given was:

> Now when you meet in battle your opponents then it is smiting of the necks until you have routed them; then bind fast the bonds; then either give them a free dismissal afterwards or exact a ransom (47 : 4).

The meaning of the verse is quite clear. Prisoners of war may be exchanged for Muslims who are in the hands of the enemy, or they may be set free when the ransom fixed for them has been paid, or they may be set free unconditionally as a friendly gesture to the enemy, or on purely humanitarian grounds. Whichever alternative is adopted, the result is the same i.e., the prisoners regain their freedom. In the whole of the Qur'ān, this is the only verse concerning prisoners of war. Neither here nor elsewhere is there any hint of making them slaves. The Qur'ān, which directs the believers to expiate their faults for even a trivial mishap by emancipating a slave

(90 : 13), which permits the waging of war for defending human rights, and which has proclaimed the equality of men, could not possibly sanction slavery in any form. On the contrary, it commands that prisoners should be treated as guests as long as they remain in the custody of the Muslims. Abu Aziz was one of those who were taken prisoners at the battle of Badr. After his release, he returned to his people and told them about the treatment he had received. "I was billeted on an Anṣār. He used to give me bread and other good things to eat while he himself and his family subsisted on dates. I felt ashamed and often gave back the bread to him. He refused to touch it and forced me to eat it."

Another man who fell into the hands of the Muslims at Badr, was Sohail Bin 'Umar. Sohail was a famous orator and had delivered many orations denouncing and vilifying the *Rasūl*. The Muslim's naturally wished to punish him and somebody suggested that two of his front teeth be knocked out. The *Rasūl*, however, did not give his consent to this proposal and Sohail was not touched.

Some of the prisoners taken at Badr were set free after they paid the ransom. There were many who were too poor to pay the ransom. Of these, those who were literate were told that each could buy his freedom by teaching ten Muslim boys. The remaining were set free unconditionally. Those who had paid their ransom were told that if at any time in future they came over to the side of the Muslims, the money they had paid would be refunded to them:

> O Rasul! say to those captives who are in your hands: If Allah knows any good in your hearts, He will give you better than that which has been taken from you; and will protect you (8 : 70).

It should be noted that whenever the words "bondmen" or "bond-maids" occur in the Qur'ān, they always refer to those who were already there in Arab society. They are spoken of in the past tense. Nowhere does the Qur'ān say: "Make your enemies slaves and such are the rules concerning them." When Muslims rose to power,

they gradually emancipated whatever slaves there were in Arab society, and closed the door of slavery for the future.

Men belonging to the enemy camp would now and then seek refuge in the Muslim town. The Qur'ān commanded the Muslims not to turn them back. They should be given an asylum and during their stay the Qur'ānic teaching should be expounded to them. They were, however, free to accept or reject it. If they decided to return to their people, they should not only be permitted to do so but also an escort should be provided for them so that they could reach their town in safety:

> And if any one of your opponents seeks your protection, then protect him so that he may hear the word of Allah and then escort him to his place of safety (9 : 6).

It is certainly the duty of the Muslims to enlighten these men on the aim and objective of Islam: but the Qur'ān expressly forbids the Muslims to coerce them to accept the Islamic faith.

VII. Is the Abolition of War Impossible?

Human history presents a chequered pattern of periods of peace alternating with periods of war. Will the same pattern be continued or is permanent peace attainable in the foreseeable future? We can answer these questions with the help of the Qur'ān. The verse dealing with the prisoners of war goes on to say that, "war will go on until it lays down its burdens" (47 : 4). In other words, the motives that lead to war are not rooted in man. They arise in a certain type of social organisation and will disappear if the social order is radically changed. The society we have built up is a competitive and acquisitive society. If it is supplanted by the Qur'ānic social order, which encourages creative activity and competition in social service, war will cease to be a factor in human affairs. There will be peace all over the world. The Qur'ān seeks to weld the races of man into a single harmonious universal society. All national and group rivalries will, therefore, disappear. In such a social order,

individuals as well as groups would cease to compete with each other for the prize of power, the power that might enable them to exploit others. They would have learnt to desire something nobler which would unite them instead of dividing them. They would desire self-development through serving others and working for the common good—the progress of humanity. This social order would provide man with the things he needs most—security, freedom and opportunity for self-expression and self-development. There will be nothing in it to arouse envy, jealousy, greed or malevolence in the heart of man. There will be no clash of interests and, therefore, no conflict. Then, in the words of the Qur'ān, "War will lay down its burdens," i.e., the function it has so far performed will not be needed in the new order.

As things are, however, it may sometimes be necessary to wage a war in the cause of justice. The *Rasūl* is reported to have said, "The purpose of war is to force the oppressor to bow before that which is just" (*Tirmidhi*). Bukhari, the compiler of the traditions of the *Rasūl*, reports that once a question was put to the latter, "One man goes to war for the sake of fame, another to prove his courage and yet another for personal revenge. Of these, whose motive can we approve of?" The *Rasūl* replied, "He who fights that the law of Allah reign supreme, his war is for Allah."

Man-made laws merely safeguard the interests of a particular group. Such laws will not be acceptable to other groups: but God is the *Rabb* of all mankind. His Laws protect the interests of each and all men. His laws, consequently, provide a secure foundation for the world peace. In Islam this foundation is called "*Tauḥīd.*" i.e., Oneness. *Tauḥīd* signifies One set of Laws of the One God for the One Creation—mankind. The social order which is based on this foundation is *dīn* and is *one* for all humanity.

This truth is beginning to dawn on the minds of Western thinkers. If full realisation does not come to them, the fault will lie with the Muslims who received

the Divine Law fourteen centuries ago and have not yet expounded it and interpreted it to mankind. The Muslims should bear in mind that the scientific outlook has sunk deep into the modern mind and the modern man speaks the language of science. The Qur'ān says: "Mankind is one community" (2 : 213). It is far easier for modern man to understand this truth than it was for his forebears fourteen centuries ago. Man can come into his own only as a member of a universal brotherhood. The Qur'ān sought to establish such a brotherhood, and did establish it within the domain in which Qur'ānic laws prevailed. Its message is not for any group but for all humanity. Each of the *Anbiya* who preceded Muḥammad (P) appealed to a particular group. Muḥammad (P) alone was the bearer of a message for mankind as a whole:

> O Mankind! I am the messenger of Allah to you all, the messenger of Him unto Whom belongeth the sovereignty of the heavens and the earth. There is no Sovereign Authority save Him (7 : 158).

It is, therefore, the duty of all peace-loving inhabitants of this earth to rally to the Qur'ān and march forward under its banner. The dream of perpetual peace will then become a fact:

> O Mankind! There hath come unto you an exhortation from your *Rabb*, a balm for that which is in the breasts, a guidance and *Raḥmah* for believers (10 : 57).

About this social order the Qur'ān says:

> He who enters it, is safe (3 : 96).

Men all over the world should address themselves to the task of building up this social order, in which rests the hope of humanity.

References

1. Dean Inge, *The Fall of Idols*, pp. 176-179 ; 177 ; 181.
2. *The Young India*, p. 147, (quoted by Fatima Mansur in *Process of Independence*, p. 44).
3. *Harijan*, dated 27 October 1946.
4. N. Machiavelli, *The Prince*, p. 64.
5. Quoted by J.M. Murray, op. cit., p. 212.

Chapter XVI

RISE AND FALL OF NATIONS

I. Qur'ān and History

THE Qur'ān has, time and again, directed man's attention to the phenomena of nature and the events of history, and has exhorted him to reflect and ponder over them. These two fields, so apart from each other, are fundamentally alike, as both reflect the same Divine purpose. The working of law is discernible in both. Today, the processes that govern the coming into and passing out of existence of living organisms seem pretty clear. But when we pass from the individual life to group existence, the picture becomes a little hazy. Nevertheless, creditable data has been compiled on the rules that govern the emergence and disintegration of human groups. The philosophy of history has tried to broaden the spectrum and to identify the laws that govern the rise and fall of nations. It has been a laudable attempt, but it has, so far, failed to give an intelligible account of the course of human history. None of the concepts put forward has held the field for long. The result is that history still appears to be a disorderly succession of fortuitous events. The Qur'ān invites a look into history from a fresh angle which deserves attention. According to the Qur'ān, the Divine purpose is at work in human affairs as it is in nature—the inanimate world—but with a difference. In nature, the Divine purpose is progressively accomplished through laws from which there is no escape. We may call them the Divine Will. The material is passive and can be moulded into any form concordant with the purpose of God. In history, on the other hand, the

purpose is to be worked out through the willing and active co-operation of free finite beings. The Divine Will, by a self-imposed restraint, permits them to act and choose for themselves. The human beings who play their part on the stage of history, have, sometimes, lived and acted in harmony with God's purpose and, sometimes, against it. In the former case, they have prospered, progressed and taken their rightful place in the vanguard of civilisation ; in the latter case, they have fallen behind other people, have decayed and ultimately have been supplanted by others. In this process, a causal relation is indicated. Each way of life produces its own consequences. The set of regulations which governs these results is the Law of Requital. As you sow, so shall you reap. This law is as relentless and inexorable in its working as any other law of nature. The Qur'ān has repeatedly affirmed this law and, drawing upon human history, has provided copious illustrations of its working. A nation which adopts a way of life that accords with the moral order of the universe, achieves success in every field of activity. It wins both wisdom and material prosperity. A nation whose way of life is opposed to this order, inevitably decays and disintegrates.

History is a record of the rise and fall of nations. It tells us about the nations that flourished in the past—their way of life, the goals they pursued, the values around which their culture was organised, their actions and the consequences of those actions. History taken not merely as a chronicle of events but as assessment of working of values can help us solve our own problems. This assessment would give us power—power of prediction and power of control—in the sphere of collective affairs. We can avoid pitfalls. If we find ourselves following a course that has brought nations to a calamitous end, we can check ourselves in time, retrace our steps back to the crossroad and choose a better path, if not the right one. We can thus have not only a guiding light to judge our own way of life, our thinking and our actions, but also an insight into the future of other nations from the ideals

pursued by them. In short, if we wish to make the best of life, there is no escape from a study of history relating the conduct of the people with the fate that befell them. That is why the Qur'ān exhorts us to go round the world and see for ourselves "the fate of those who defied God," i.e., His Laws. Wealth, power, numbers, nothing could save them when they ran afoul of the higher values. History has judged them, as it will, in time, judge us. The prognosis is within our grasp:

> Verily, we have sent down for you revelations that make plain, and the example of those who passed away before you. An admonition unto those who wish to be secured from the pitfalls in the way of life (24 : 34).

The method of the Qur'ān is, first to state the laws that govern the fate of nations, and then to cite instances from history to illustrate the working of those laws. The purpose of the Qur'ān is not to record past events in all their details but to give sufficient reference to make its own point and leave out the rest. Thus the Qur'ān imparts such a deep insight into the nature of the life process that it inspires unquestioning faith in its pronouncement when it says:

> Have they not travelled in the land to see the nature of the consequence for those before them? They were more numerous than these and mightier in power and in the traces (which they have left behind them) in the earth. But all that they used to earn availed them not. And when their messengers brought them clear proofs (of the consequences of their doings), they exulted in the knowledge they themselves possessed. And that which they were wont to mock, befell them (40 : 82-83).

These nations enjoyed many advantages. They possessed power, wealth, technical knowledge and a rich material culture. In prosperity they had multiplied and spread over the earth. But when they chose to defy the moral order of the universe, all their efforts to ward off the blow of fate were of no avail. They fell into decay and dwindled away. They could not plead ignorance as they had been warned time and again by *Anbiya* from amongst themselves. These *Anbiya* had admonished them to recognise their mistakes and mend their ways.

They, however, chose to ignore the warnings and persisted in treading a dangerous path. Vanity and pride ruled their hearts and, elated by temporary successes, they failed to foresee the long-term results of their actions. At last, they reached the limit that the Laws of God have set to everything. When they crossed it, their fate was sealed. They had reached the point of no return. Remorse and repentence could not save them thereafter :

> (When they had crossed the limit) their *Īmān* could not avail them when they saw their doom. This is Allah's Law which has ever taken course in regard to His servants (mankind) ; and there were the ungodly lost (40 : 85).

A prominent aspect of the eternal, the unalterable, law is that there are limits within which possibilities of change and recovery are available. Beyond those limits, nothing avails and all attempts to save oneself run into sands.

II. The Law at Work

The basic attitude that the law demands in human relationship is respect for the dignity of man—for human personality which every individual possesses equally and which has an intrinsic value. A disregard of this value manifests itself in exploitation of other human beings, either by damage to their person or to their possessions. The exploiting nations are ruined :

> How many a community, that dealt unjustly have We shattered, and raised up after them another community. And when they saw the consequences of their doings in the shape of their doom, they tried to run away from it.
>
> But it was said unto them : run not away but return to that wherein you delighted and to your dwellings, that you may be questioned (as to whence you had obtained so much wealth and the way in which you had dealt with others).
>
> They confessed there upon and said : Lo! we were wrongdoers. And this their crying ceased not till We made them reaped corn, extinct (21 : 11-14).

The consequences may take their time but are inevitable. The universe was not meant to be without a moral order :

We created not the heaven and earth and all that is between them in sport (21 : 16).

They have been created so that Our Law of Requital may be set in operation (45 : 22).

When a people choose to take a life in defiance of the moral order, there is actually no time lag between action and its decaying result on their life process. But it may take some time for the effect to be perceptible and to manifest itself in social and economic maladies. Anyone stopping at the maladies in his analysis of the causes of a nation's fall would only be reaching the obvious symptoms but not the root cause—the ungodly way of life. The symptoms can be suppressed without curing the real disease. This would be inviting eruption of the disease in other and more dangerous forms. The Qur'ān, taking a comprehensive view of life, calls for a radical cure, that is, a change of heart and a new orientation. When this change is brought about, the symptoms start disappearing. The only cure for social ills is a return to the path of righteousness and rectitude.

The Qur'ān designates the Law of Requital as the *Sunnah* of God—the uniform way in which He deals with the world in its physical and moral aspects. *Sunnah* implies order, uniformity and consistency. It is the expression of God's rationally directed Will.

This has been the course followed by God with regard to those who passed away before. The bidding of God is a decree, measured according to a definite pattern called Divine Laws (33 : 39). This law, or "habit of God" knows no change. It will operate in the future as it has operated in the past:

This is the course (habit) of Allah with regard to those who passed away before; and never shalt thou find a change in the course (law) of Allah (33 : 62).

This "habit of God" is also specifically related to the consequences of going against His laws:

And they swore by Allah, their most binding oath, that if a warner came to them, they would be more tractable than any of the

> nations, yet when a warner came unto them, he aroused in them naught save repugnance (shown in their) behaving arrogantly in the land and plotting mischief ; and the plotting of mischiefs encloseth but the people who make it. Do they then expect a treatment other than the one meted out to those of old. But thou wilt not find any change in the course of God nor shalt thou find any variation in the course of God (35 : 42-43).

And nothing in the universe is out of His reach or out of His knowledge:

> Allah is not such that aught in the heavens or in the earth escapeth Him. Lo ! He is the Wise, the Mighty (35 : 44).

III. The Qur'ānic View of History

Because of his rational nature, man always seeks to discern the meaning of things. He has been least successful in his attempt to discern the meaning of history. What does history mean? Is it merely "a tale told by an idiot, signifying nothing?" Or, can we discern, however dimly it may be, some plan, design, pattern or rhythm in the long succession of events recorded therein? This question has exercised the minds of some of the greatest thinkers. They have had tantalising glimpses of the meaning of history but no more. We shall briefly refer to the views of two most influential thinkers of the nineteenth century—Hegel and Marx. Evolution is the key-note of the Hegelian theory of history. If we ask what it is that evolves, the answer is reason or the Absolute Idea. The Idea is continuously unfolding itself, actualising its immense potentialities in the historical process. The process is, therefore, meaningful and purposive. Development does not, however, proceed directly forward: the Idea first begins as a thesis, then a force arises opposite to it, called an antithesis, and finally there is a compromise termed as a synthesis, which incorporates the best in each of the preceding positions. This onward movement of the Idea is termed Dialectic. Reason, whether in the individual, society or the universe, develops in the dialectical fashion. The disharmony implicit in everything is the cause of change and

development. For Hegel, the universe is both rational and dynamic. Each civilisation is higher in the scale of value than the preceding one and will in its turn give place to a still higher one. Progress, therefore, is a real fact. The Hegelian view certainly makes the historical process meaningful. This view, however, suffers from a fatal weakness. It fails to do justice to individuality. Evolution, working slowly through untold ages, has finally produced the free rational individual. Such an individual may be regarded as the goal towards which the process had been moving. The future course of evolution would therefore be in the direction of the gradual perfection of the individual. In the Hegelian scheme, the emphasis is on the *whole* and the individual merely subserves the purposes of the *whole*. This, we believe, is a fatal error, and is responsible, though not solely, for the theory of "the nation being an organism, with a being, ends and means of action superior to those of the individuals, separate or grouped, of whom it is composed . . . . a moral, political and economic unity, integrally realised in (a totalitarian) state,"[1] thereby crushing the individual under the iron wheels of this *Jagannathan* chariot.

In the Marxian theory, prime importance is attached to the economic factor. The economic system at any particular time determines the ideals, values, moral standard and every aspect of the society. One economic system gives place to another in the same dialectical manner. Here too, the focus of interest is on the society and not on the individual. Society develops through the working of economic forces and the individual has no choice but to fit into whatever social system happens to be in ascendance. Any individual who refuses to fit into the social pattern, is weeded out. The Marxian theory ignores the main trend of evolution in the present age. It too has led to the establishment of a totalitarian regime in which each individual man is no more than a mere cog in a gigantic machine.

It is obvious that both Hegel and Marx glimpsed only

part of, and not the whole, truth. Both were right in regarding the universe as a dynamic evolving system: both were wrong in denying that the goal was the emergence of fully developed, perfect, free and rational individuals. The historical process becomes meaningful only when it is viewed as developing towards this goal.

This is the central element in the Qur'ānic view of history. The historical process is a manifestation of the evolutionary process—a process in which the participants are individuals, endowed with freedom and foresight. However, the foresight they possess is limited and bedevilled by sordid distractions. In this situation, there are limitless possibilities of taking a wrong turn. What is intended is objective direction that can keep on the path towards the distant goal that is not immediately comprehensible. Human reason supplemented by Revelation enables man to rediscover the right path. The historical process will ultimately produce conditions in which each individual can devote himself to the pursuit of the absolute values which are the primary concern of Revelation. The goal is the setting up of the Divine Social Order.

We must, however, ask why this social order is nowhere visible, not even in any Muslim country, although the Qur'ān has been with us for fourteen centuries. The answer is that cosmic processes work slowly, very slowly. It is only by taking a long-term view that we can perceive the trend of a world process. To quote the Qur'ān: "But lo! A day with Allah is equal to a thousand years as ye reckon" (22 : 47). The whole of humanity can move only slowly towards this objective. Man has to suffer many set-backs, reverses, disappointments, and pass through many a trial and travail before he can attain it. He must work patiently and hopefully and keep up his courage even when the prospect is bleak. He who does the right thing, no matter how little, is helping forward the process, and he who does wrong is retarding it. Every action has its natural consequences for the doer himself as well as for his nation:

And whosoever doeth good an atom's weight will see it then and whosoever doeth ill an atom's weight will see it then (99 : 7-8).

Every action of man is recorded and the consequences inevitably follow. Good, however, prevails over bad. The consequences of a wrong action can be nullified by a right act. "Good deeds," says the Qur'ān, "annul bad deeds" (11 : 114). The fate of the individual or of the nation, therefore, depends on which kind of actions predominate:

As for him whose scales are heavy (with good works) he will live a pleasant life. But as for him whose scales are light, the "Bereft and Hungry One" will be his mother (abode). Ah! what will convey unto thee what she is—a raging fire (101 : 6-11).

A grim fate surely overtakes the nation which has set itself in opposition to the moral order of the universe. However, as already stated, the Law of Requital works slowly. The effects of a particular way of life may not be obvious for years. The nation is deluded by a false sense of security. If it does not mend its ways and persists in the wrong course, it is doomed "and God shall lead them on (to destruction) by steps they perceive not" (68 : 44). The Universal Divine Order has no use for a nation which merely impedes the progress of humanity. Such a nation drops out of the procession of mankind and can never rejoin it. Its disappearance is not even noticeable:

And the heaven and the earth wept not for them, nor were they reprieved (44 : 29).

Such a nation, sooner or later, disappears from history. A nation which takes to destructive ways is invariably granted a respite, long or short. It is saved if it retraces its steps and turns back to the right path before reaching the point of no return. This respite is termed *ajal* in the Qur'ān. "For every nation there is an *ajal*" (7 : 34), and "for every *ajal* there is a law" (13 : 38). The limit beyond which a nation cannot pass without being irretrievably lost is determined by Divine Law:

Allah effaceth and establisheth everything according to a law the source of which is with Him (13 : 39).

IV. Doom of the Nations

History bears testimony to the fact that the conduct of nations, as that of individuals, is governed by the Law of Requital. A nation which lives and acts in accordance with the moral order and furthers the development of man, prospers and grows strong. An unjust and reactionary nation, on the other hand, heads for ruin. Each succeeds or fails as a consequence of its own acts. The events of history are not unrelated and arbitrary but are truly determined by an unalterable standard. History is not the sport of a capricious fate but is a lawful, orderly process. If a nation suffers, it has brought the suffering on itself. It cannot blame it on any outside agency. "He who has to perish," says the Qur'ān, "perishes by a clear proof, and he who has to survive, survives by a clear proof" (8 : 42). Success or failure are the eventual consequences of our good or bad conduct. The Qur'ān makes this clear:

God does not do injustice to anyone. It is the people who do injustice to themselves (11 : 101).

It is man who often acts against his best interests:

Why should God punish you if you are grateful? (4 : 147).

In another place, the Qur'ān puts it still more clearly. "When misfortune befalls man, he exclaims: 'my *Rabb* has abased me for no reason." The Qur'ān replies that God is never unjust in His dealings with men. "If you suffer, it is because you, on your part, never succour the orphan and the lonely, and urge not the feeding of the poor, and you devour the heritage with greed, and love wealth with abounding love" (89 : 16-20). These are the causes of their misfortunes. In this connection, the Qur'ān lays down a significant principle:

In truth my *Rabb* was not one Who would destroy the townships tyrannically while their people were doing right (11 : 117).

Only those are punished who deviate from the right path (46 : 35).

The "doom of nations" is a recurrent theme in the Qur'ān. It is worth while to determine the exact meaning of this term. Some nations have, in fact, been completely forgotten. It is not, however, to this fact that the Qur'ān directs our attention. The Qur'ān wants us to ponder over the plight of a nation, which, through its misdeeds, has lost its independence and is living in a condition of poverty, political subjection and economic dependence. It has ceased to play a creative role in the world. The leadership of humanity has passed out of its hands. It no longer *lives*, it merely vegetates. It has dropped out of the procession of humanity which is slowly but steadily moving towards a grand destination. The moment it lost touch with the moral order, it began to decay. Death is preferable to decay. The Qur'ān says that a nation begins to decline when it pursues wealth and takes to hoard money. It should have spent the money for the general good. The rich, instead of helping the poor and the needy, amassed wealth for themselves. The inevitable consequence was that the nation began to deteriorate. It believed that wealth would make it strong but wealth worked like a poison in its system and undermined it. It ruined itself by pursuing an ignoble end:

Ye are those who are called to spend in the way of Allah. Yet among you there are those who hoard. And as for him who hoardeth he hoardeth only from his own self. And Allah is the rich and ye are the poor. And if ye turn away, He will exchange you for some other folk and they shall not be like you (47 : 38).

The meaning is clear. If a nation refuses to work for the development of mankind and for the establishment of the Divine Order and pursues the ignoble end of self aggrandisement, it will be supplanted by another nation carrying more weight in the balance of humanity. The acquisitive nation will remain stuck in its wealth and another nation will be called upon to give a lead to mankind. This latter nation is said to be "better than its predecessor" (70 : 41).

The struggle between nations is carried on, on the physical as well as the moral plane. A nation which relies on brute force and cunning may succeed for a time but ultimately fails. It has to face not only the external enemy but also the discontent among the common people. However strong and well-organised the government may be, it succumbs to its opponents because it was based on injustice and tyranny. The rivalries of political factions and the mounting discontent of the people under the oppressive rule, brings about the downfall of the organisation—even if it is not defeated on the field of battle. This is the fate of the unjust society:

> Say: He is able to send punishment upon you from above you or from beneath your feet, or to confuse you into parties and make you taste the tyranny one of another (6 : 65).

The struggle between nations when it is on the physical plane, with brute force opposed to brute force, debases and bestialises man. Men are not demoralised if the struggle is confined to the moral plane. Such a struggle does not breed hatred among nations. In this case, that system, be it political, social or economic, prevails which has greater value and clears the path for progress. Here a word of caution is needed. The moment a system succeeds, one should not jump to the conclusion that it is of greater value than its rivals. We should take a long term view. Only when its success is enduring and it is shown to be productive of good results for mankind over a period of time, can it be judged to be of value. The historical process tests each system and preserves only that which really expands and enriches human life. The Qur'ān rightly exhorts us to study history:

> Have they not travelled in the land and seen the nature of the consequence for those who were before them? They were stronger than these in power and they dug the earth and built upon it more than these have built. Messengers of their own came to them with clear proofs. Surely Allah wronged them not but they did wrong themselves (30 : 9).

A mere glance at the awe-inspiring ruins of their cities shows that they possessed everything desired by man;

power, wealth, vast resources and intelligence of a high order and yet, despite these, they could not withstand the forces of decay and disintegration. It was because their system of values was fundamentally wrong. They were bewitched by the glamour of false and transient values, such as power, wealth and material prosperity. They had intelligence but not wisdom. They lacked insight into the deeper things of life. They paid the price for disregarding the demands of the moral order of the universe. The Qur'ān cites the examples of *'Ād* and *Thamūd*. Both were rich and powerful nations. They were highly intelligent; as the Qur'ān says, they were "keen observers" (29 : 38). But they chose a way of life which was opposed to the moral order. Their scale of values was wrong. The Qur'ān says that it is the duty of the *Mustabṣirīn*, the intellectuals and the leaders of thought, to discover the right path and persuade the people to follow it. When these men do not discharge their duty properly, the nation slides into injustice and tyranny and heads for ruin. The leaders of thought are bound to keep a watchful eye on the nation and to warn it when it goes wrong. The intellectuals are to blame if the nation pursues false values. If a nation begins to decay, the process usually starts at the top. The upper stratum of the society first becomes corrupt and the corruption spreads downwards. It is strange that men of high intelligence should be the first to be corrupted. It is because they cannot resist the temptation to use their intelligence to further their own interests:

> And verily, We had empowered them with that wherewith We have not empowered you, and had assigned them ears and eyes and mind; but their ears and eyes and mind availed them naught, since they rejected the laws revealed by Allah: and what they used to mock befell them (46 : 26).

It is to this truth that the Qur'ān directs our attention. Knowledge and understanding, wealth and power, skill and intelligence will not avail us if we adopt a course opposed to the eternal moral order. A social system based on false values, on the glorification of wealth and power, may flourish for a time, but will

ultimately crumble down. Iqbal has rightly said:

> A society based on capitalism cannot maintain itself.
> However much wily politicians may try to buttress it up. (*Bāng-e-Dara*).

In the course of a discussion of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, Briffault has made some thought-provoking observations, which we will do well to ponder over:

> No system of human organisation that is false in its very principle in its very foundation, can save itself by any amount of cleverness and efficiency in the means by which that false-hood is carried out and maintained by any amount of superficial adjustment and tinkering. It is doomed root and branch as long as the root remains what it is.[2]

He goes on to say:

> Humanity does not necessarily stand upon a higher plane of being when riding above the clouds, nor does a hundred miles an hour constitute progress; man is not intellectually transformed by being able to weigh the stars and disport his mind over wider spheres of knowledge. There is a deeper aspect of human affairs. There is something which stands nearer to the essence of human worth than any form of material or intellectual power, than the control of nature or the development of the mind's insight. Power, civilisation, culture count for naught, if they are associated with moral evil. The real standard by which the worth of the human world is to be computed is a moral standard. It is in an ethical sense that the word 'good' bears its essential meaning, when applied to things human; and no process of human evolution can be counted real which is not above all an evolution in "goodness."[3]

A society based on false principles inevitably disintegrates. We quote again from Briffault:

> What really happens is that the phase of society, the order of things in which disregard of right is habitual and accepted, inevitably deteriorates and perishes. However much the individual may temporarily benefit by inequity, the social organisation of which he is a part and the very class which enjoys the fruits of that inequity, suffer inevitable deterioration through its operation. They are unadapted to the facts of their environment. The wages of sin is death by the inevitable operation of natural selection.[4]

This did not happen only in the remote past when men were still ignorant and intellectually immature. We

notice the same process of deterioration in the modern scientific civilisation. Let us see what Western thinkers have to say about their own civilisation. We quote from Rene Guenon:

> Modern civilisation has gone downwards step by step until it has ended by sinking to the lowest elements in man and aiming at little more than the satisfaction of the needs inherent in the material side of his nature, an aim which is, in any case, illusory as it constantly creates more artificial needs than it can satisfy.[5]

He goes on to say:

> Not only have they limited their intellectual ambition to inventing and constructing machines, but they have ended by becoming in actual fact, machines themselves. The inventions whose number is at present growing at an ever increasing rate, are all the more dangerous in that they bring into play forces whose real nature is quite unknown to the men who utilise them.[6]

Guenon ventures to predict the ultimate result of these activities:

> Those who unchain the brute forces of matter will perish, crushed by these same forces, of which they will no longer be masters.[7]

Einstein's remarks on this point deserve careful attention:

> By painful experience we have learnt that rational thinking does not suffice to solve the problems of our social life. Penetrating research and keen scientific work have often had tragic implications for mankind, producing on the one hand, inventions which liberated man from exhausting physical labour, making his life easier and richer, but on the other hand, introducing a grave restlessness into his life, making him slave to his technological environment, and most catastrophic of all—creating the means for his own mass destruction. This indeed is a tragedy of overwhelming poignancy.[8]

He warns us against entrusting our destiny to intellect:

> We should take care not to make the intellect our God: it has of course powerful muscles, but no personality. It cannot lead, it can only serve, and it is not fastidious in its choice of a leader. This characteristic is reflected in the qualities of its priests—the intellectuals. The intellect has a sharp eye for methods and tools but is blind to end and values.[9]

The result is that, in the words of Jung, "along the great high-roads of the world, everything seems desolate and out worn."[10]

So far we have been considering modern society. It is time to turn to the individual and his problems. It is generally admitted that modern man is far from being happy. He possesses knowledge, power and material comforts which were undreamt of by his ancestors. These, however, have not given him the things he desires most—peace and happiness. Jung set himself the task of diagnosing the disease from which the modern man suffers. He reached the conclusion that while the modern man's body is satisfied, his soul is not. He is out of tune with the universe. He yearns after unification with the universe but finds that a widening gulf separates him from the heart of Reality. Somewhere he took a wrong turning and in the midst of luxury, is a prey to acute discontent. The poet Iqbal sounded a similar note of warning. Of the modern man he says:

> Love has no place in his life, and intellect, biting like a serpent, keeps him restless.
>
> He has not enabled Divine guidance to subdue and control his intellect.
>
> He explores the inter-stellar spaces, but has left the world of the mind unexplored.
>
> He has captured the power locked up in the sun's rays, but his own life remains enveloped in darkness (*Ḍarb-e-Kalīm*).

Modern man possesses wealth, power and vast resources. His control over the forces of nature and his technological progress are truly astounding. What then is the cause of his discontent and of the decline of his civilisation? The Qur'ān provides us with an answer. The cause is within himself:

> Allah never changes the condition of a nation until they first change what is in themselves (8 : 53).

This verse makes it clear that man's destiny lies in his own hands. What he needs is a change of heart. He has been following false ideals and pursuing ignoble ends. He has cut himself off from Reality and is drifting aimlessly. He has lost sight of the noble end he had once glimpsed with the help of Divine Revelation. For a

time he pursued it, but soon allowed himself to be allured by the glittering tawdry objects that lay around. He has seized them but they have brought him only disillusionment. He was not meant to become a glorified beast but to rise to a higher plane of existence. He can save himself only by recovering his *Īmān* in God and in his own noble self endowed with great potentialities which he has neglected. The cure for his malady lies in his turning back to God, i.e., resuming the pursuit of the absolute values. Let us see what Bertrand Russell says about it:

> In the world in which we find ourselves, the possibilities of good are almost limitless and the possibilities of evil no less so. Our present predicament is due, more than anything else, to the fact that we have learnt to understand and control to a terrifying extent, the forces of nature outside us, but not those that are embodied in ourselves.[11]

Several verses of the Qur'ān throw light on the gradual decline of a nation. We are told that, as already stated, it is the upper stratum of society that is the first to be infected with wickedness. Statesmen and leaders of thought succumb to the allurement of false ideals and values. They think that scientific knowledge and technology will make them the masters of the world. They consider absolute values as figments of imagination, the creation of the minds of visionaries. They shut their eyes to the hidden riches of the human mind and glorify that which man has in common with the animals. Their distorted vision of life is adopted by their followers. The infection spreads downwards until the whole society is contaminated:

> Have you not seen those who gave the bounty of Allah in exchange for thanklessness and led their people to the abode of perdition—Hell? They are exposed thereto. A hopeless end (14 : 28-29).

The masses too, as they allowed themselves to be misled by their leaders, are not quite blameless. It is, no doubt, true that the common people do not have the intelligence and knowledge that their leaders possess. As free

responsible beings, however, it is their duty to think for themselves and pull up their leaders when they go wrong. This they did not do and, therefore, they too cannot escape punishment. However, in Hell the common people will hold their leaders responsible for the fate that has befallen them:

> Oh ! if thou couldst see when the wrong-doers are brought before their *Rabb*, how they cast the blame one to another ; how those who were weaker (the followers) say unto those who were proud (the leaders) : "but for you, we would have been believers" (34 : 31).

The leaders will retort that they (the followers) had willingly obeyed them and as such had a share in their guilt:

> And those who were proud say unto those who were weaker: "did we drive you away from the guidance after it had come unto you. Nay, but you were yourself guilty" (34 : 32).

In short, the followers and leaders will hurl accusation at each other when they see the doom. The followers, while admitting that they had obeyed them of their own accord, will plead that they had been taken in by their specious arguments and plausible reasoning:

> Those who were weaker say unto those who were proud : "Nay, but it was your scheming night and day when ye commanded us to disbelieve in Allah and set up rivals (like yourself) unto Him" (34 : 33).

The followers will implore God to inflict a twofold punishment on the leaders as they were doubly guilty, going astray themselves and taking others with them:

> And they say : Our *Rabb* ! Oh ! we obeyed our chiefs and our great men and they misled us from the way. Our *Rabb* ! Oh ! give them double torment and curse them with a mighty curse (33 : 67-68).

Thus the Qur'ān, in the form of an allegory, shows the respective roles of the leaders and followers in the decline and fall of a nation. Corruption starts at the upper layer of society and spreads downwards. Common men, by shirking their duty to think independently, become accomplices in the crimes of their leaders. Had they rebelled, the leaders might have been brought to their

senses and checked themselves. Their willing obedience to errant leaders was in itself a crime and they have to expiate it.

It is not only individuals who imitate their betters. Nations too are tempted to imitate stronger, wealthier and more advanced nations. Backward nations eagerly follow the lead of an advanced nation. They play the sedulous ape to the great nation, faithfully copying its manners and way of life and adopting its institutions, moral standards and ideals. Most members of the weaker nation take pride in holding beliefs and opinions fashionable in an advanced nation. The relation of leader and follower is established between the great nation and other nations. The leader nation commands and the follower nations submissively obey. If the great nation is pursuing false ideals and values, the nations which have accepted its leadership likewise do so. Such passive submission to another nation paralyses the mental powers of the members of the weaker nations. They lose the capacity for independent thinking. They succumb to the glamour of the leader nation and are blind to its defects and faults. They mould their life on its model and think and feel as it does. What it considers to be right is right for them. They follow blindly in the steps of the great nation and finally fall with it into the same abyss of degradation. This has happened time and again in history. At the present time, people of the East are bewitched by the glamour of the Western civilisation. They do not view it with a critical eye. They are ardent admirers of both its good and bad qualities. They too worship the false gods of material prosperity and technological power. They are heading for disaster When disaster befalls them both, they will blame each other :

> Every time a nation entereth (the Hell) it curseth its sister (nation) till when they have all been made to follow one another thither, the latter of them shall say of the former of them : "Our *Rabb* ! these led us astray so give them double torment of the fire" (7 : 38).

And God will say :

For each one there is double (torment) but ye do not know (7 : 38).

The reason is obvious. God has granted "eyes and ears" (knowledge and understanding) to all men. It is their duty to make full use of them. They should give careful thought to the consequences of any course of action which others advise them to follow. As rational and free beings, they are responsible for their acts. They cannot shift the responsibility to the shoulders of another. They must think, decide and choose for themselves. If they allow others, however superior to them in intellectual knowledge these may be, to think, decide and choose for them, they are abdicating their right of free choice. They have to suffer the consequences of their acts whether they performed them after due deliberation or in unthinking imitatation of those whom they admired. If they had pondered on the Divine Revelation and had reflected on the fate of erring nations in the past, they would not have been dazzled by the temporary success of a nation acting in open defiance of the moral order. They are courting disaster and cannot plead in their defence that they were merely following the lead of people more intelligent and knowledgeable than themselves:

And how many a community we have destroyed that exulted in but misused the means of livelihood! And ponder over their dwellings, which have not been inhabited after them save a little. And We, even We, were the inheritors (28 : 58).

Again:

How many a city We have destroyed while it did wrong, so that it lieth to this day in ruins, and how many deserted wells and lofty towers (22 : 45).

The Qur'ān says of them that "they have been made into legends" (23 : 44). How ephemeral is earthly glory is shown by the ruins of the great cities of the past:

Say : Travel in the earth and see what was the end of the guilty (27 : 69).

We are exhorted to study history, that we may avoid the path which led others to ruin. We are also advised

to travel around in the world and carefully observe the life of contemporary nations. We will then see that knowledge, power, wealth, none of these can save a nation when it begins to pursue false values:

> Have they not travelled in the land and have they hearts wherewith to feel and ears wherewith to hear! For indeed it is not the eyes that grow blind, but it is hearts, which are within the bosoms, that grow blind (22 : 46).

The great lesson that the Qur'ān teaches us is that individuals as well as nations are the architects of their own fate. Their destiny lies in their own hands. If they choose to defy the moral order, they bring irretrievable ruin on themselves. If, on the other hand, they live in harmony with the eternal moral order and pursue the absolute values, an unlimited vista of progress lies before them. The Qur'ān, however, does not merely state this general truth. It lays down rules of conduct for the individual *as well as for the nation.* The basic principle is set down in the following verse:

> He sends down water from heaven, and the brooks flow according to their respective measures and the flood bears along a swelling foam. And from the metals which they melt in the fire, seeking to cast ornaments and necessaries, arises a scum like to it. Thus Allah coins (the similitude of) the true and the false. Then as for the foam, it passes away as scum upon the banks, while as for that which is beneficial to mankind, it remains in the earth. Thus Allah coins the similitudes (13 : 17).

The inviolable and unchangeable criterion is that:

> Only that remains which is *beneficial for the whole of mankind*; everything else passes away like scum.

This is the eternal immutable principle which throws light on the rise and fall of nations. As long as a nation is contributing something useful to mankind and adding to the store of goodness in the world, it prospers and flourishes. The moment it fails to do so, it starts on the downward course and finally ceases to play an effective role in world affairs. Whether it disappears or lingers on for decades or even centuries is immaterial. The cosmic purpose has no use for it and works itself out

through other nations. It is, therefore, clear that the nation which has identified its good with the good of *mankind* as a whole is following the right path. That nation is progressive which is creating something of value to mankind, something that enriches the life of all men. That nation will survive which strives to assure *for all men* a life of happiness, peace and prosperity. Armed might, control over the forces of nature and wealth will not avail a nation if its policies are detrimental to the interest of mankind. It is bound to pass away, for,

> Only that remains which is beneficial for *mankind* as a whole (13 : 17).

V. Cosmic Process.

This discussion emerged out of the question: why the Qur'ānic Social Order which assures a peaceful, prosperous and glorious life to mankind has not been established anywhere in the world, not even in any Muslim state, although the Divine Guidance has been with us for fourteen centuries. The answer so far provided is that cosmic process is slow, very slow when measured by serial or historic time. The point requires further elucidation. Evolutionary changes take place in the outer universe automatically, according to Divine plan, and by stages, each involving thousand and thousand of years to accomplish. This is cosmic process. In the case of man, however, this process works in a somewhat different way. Man (and here we mean man not travelling in the light of Divine guidance) when pressed by circumstances to modify any existing state of affairs, adopts a course which he thinks the best, works on it strenuously day in and day out, but finds at the end that the course adopted was wrong. He abandons it and embarks upon another course. This he has to repeat time and again. Often he feels exhausted during the course of his journey and leaves the experiment incomplete in dire frustration. Even when he reaches his destination, the labour involved and the time spent do not commensurate with the result achieved—the span of

human life is so short and the distance to be traversed so lengthy. This process of "trial and error" is another form of cosmic process. Man has, however, not been left in wilderness to find his way out, un-aided by a guide or without any sign-posts on his way. He has been blessed with Divine guidance. If he adopts the course suggested by it straightaway, not only is he protected against pitfalls but the time taken to reach the goal also shrinks from cosmic reckoning to human calendar. Fourteen hundred years ago, a group of believers made this experiment most successfully, which, apart from the miraculous results it produced, proved that neither the Qur'ānic Social Order was a utopia nor the programme laid down to establish it was un-workable. Their later generations, however, abandoned that course, with the result that they met the same fate as did the past nations who acted similarly. (This, by the way, is the negative proof of the efficacy of the Divine Law governing the rise and fall of nations). The Divine course is still there and can be taken up by any nation who wishes to reach human destination safely and within the shortest possible time:

> Say: The truth from your *Rabb* is there; so let whosoever will accept, and let whosoever will reject (18 : 29).

References

1. *Charter of Labour of 1927*, quoted by Earnest Barker, in *Principles of Social And Political Theory*, p. 133.
2. R. Briffault, *The Making of Humanity*, p. 159.
3. Ibid, p. 259.
4. Ibid, p. 262.
5. Rene Guenon, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, p. 26.
6. Ibid, pp. 126; 131.
7. Ibid, p. 136.
8. A. Einstein, *Out of My Later Years*, p. 152.
9. Ibid, p. 260.
10. C. G. Jung, *Modern Man In Search of Soul*, p. 251.
11. B. Russell, *Authority and the Individual*, p. 125.

Chapter XVII

MAN AND HIS ENVIRONMENT

I. Man and the Universe

Only that endures which is beneficial for mankind (13 : 17).

THIS verse, which was quoted at the end of the last chapter, is thought-provoking, and we will find an attempt to probe into and explore its implications, highly rewarding. Here is a reliable criterion for judging man's activities. Only those activities have intrinsic worth which lead to the production of something beneficial to mankind. The criterion, however, goes much farther than that. In the course of evolution, only those variations were preserved which were serviceable to the species in their struggle for survival. The physical world too, through the same process, has, in the course of countless ages, become a place fit for man to live in and pursue truly human ends. Had the earth grown increasingly hotter or colder, man would have long ago made his hurried exit. As it is, he prospers and flourishes on it and his efforts to understand and control it have been richly rewarded. Now, he even takes a hand in changing his physical environment in a way that helps him to rise higher in the scale of existence.

This challenging attitude towards the physical environment is, however, of recent origin. For long ages, man felt ill at ease in the world. Primitive man believed himself to be surrounded by hostile forces bent on destroying him. He believed that his only chance of survival lay in placating and appeasing those forces, and, consequently, he personified and deified them. Tormented by a

sense of utter helplessness, he thought he could save himself only by arousing the pity of the gods. He sought to appease the raging storm, the turbulent river or crashing thunder by methods which had proved effective in pacifying an enraged neighbour or a furious enemy. With the increase in knowledge and experience, this primitive view of the world was replaced by paganism. The pagans felt more secure in the world and thought it even possible to control it. Man's first crude attempts to control physical nature took the form of magic and witchcraft. Later, more advanced pagans outgrew magic and relied on their intellect to understand nature. However, the ancient belief that physical nature was unfriendly and alien to man lingered on and coloured the thinking of the greatest pagan thinkers. Plato pinned his faith on human reason and finding that the world of matter fell far short of the perfection of ideas and forms that reason apprehends, he regarded it as a poor and faint copy of the real world. He looked upon the physical world with utter contempt as a mere shadow of Reality. The philosopher, he believed, should be absorbed in the contemplation of eternal ideas and forms. The other-wordly strain in Platonism appeared in a fully developed form in Neo-Platonism, the source of all types of mysticism. The true mystic regards the physical environment as essentially evil and his chief concern is to shun it and take all precautions against being contaminated by it. He seeks salvation not with the help of the physical world but by avoiding all contact with it. The mystics also subscribe to Plato's theory of knowledge. Plato held that the senses are deceptive and knowledge gained through them is unreliable. Sense-perception cannot yield true knowledge; at best it can yield only opinion. Reason is the only source of true knowledge. Instead of observing nature, we should fix our gaze on the transcendental Reality. The mystic sought seclusion where he could devote himself to meditation and contemplation. Absorbed in himself, he was as indifferent to human society as he was to nature. He took little or no interest in the problems of social life. One social

system was as good or rather as bad for him as another. The goal of making life more enjoyable and agreeable for the common man did not appeal to him. The ideal life for him was that of the hermit. He desired communion with the Absolute, oblivious to both the physical and the social world. With the extreme subjectivism, it was distasteful to him to mix with people and work with them for improving the conditions of life. Schemes of social uplift failed to kindle a spark of interest in his mind, engrossed as it was with other-worldly matters. It did not occur to him that by understanding nature and learning to control its forces, he could make far better progress in self-development and self-realisation. He failed to see that by acquiring knowledge of nature he would gain knowledge of himself too. Human organism and its potentialities cannot be understood when man is studied in isolation. To understand him, we have to study him in the context of his physical environment. It is in the intimate interaction with the world of nature and society that human self reveals itself in all its glory. The potentialities latent in man can be actualised only by struggling with and overcoming the forces of nature. The so-called "spiritual" development which is divorced from physical and mental development—and which is the aim of all religions has no meaning. Man is an organism and one side of organism cannot be developed at the expense of other sides. He must develop as a whole. He pays a heavy price if his development is lop-sided. He must make progress on all fronts—physical, mental and moral—and this is how his personality will develop. He can open the way to progress only by making the world a better place to live in and by creating a social organisation which gives full scope for freedom and development. This is where the mystics failed. They had only a narrow vision. Preoccupied with purely "spiritual" matters of their own imagination, which do not exist in reality, they failed to apprehend a dynamic relationship with their environment. They ought to have aimed at the knowledge of man in the universe and in relationship to the universe. Man in isolation is hardly

human. Only when he is in contact with his physical environment and with his fellow-beings that he rises to his full stature.

II. The Qur'ān on Man and Nature

The Qur'ān puts man in a meaningful relationship with nature. To grasp the significance of the Qur'ānic view, we should compare it with two other views which are stoutly defended by some modern thinkers. According to one of these, nature is definitely hostile to man and takes a fiendish delight in bringing to naught his noblest enterprises. Hardy and Schopenhauer took a gloomy view of life and felt that men could enjoy peace, the peace of insensibility, only when they ceased to exist. The other view is apparently more compatible with the findings of modern thought. According to it, nature is completely indifferent to man and his ideals. It simply does not care whether man succeeds or fails. Human history may well prove to be a brief episode in cosmic evolution. The earth may go on rolling round the sun for ages after man has disappeared from its surface. Opposing both these views, the Qur'ān presents nature as friendly to man, responsive to his intellect and sympathetic to his moral endeavour. Both nature and man have been created by a wise and benevolent God and fundamentally there is no conflict between them. Man can develop only with the help of nature. This help he can obtain provided he acquires knowledge of nature and utilises it for the achievement of his moral ends in the light of Divine Guidance. The knowledge referred to is scientific knowledge. The only method by which he can study nature profitably is the scientific method. Equipped with scientific knowledge he can bend nature to his service. Natural forces can be made to serve man. This truth the Qur'ān has expressed in the metaphorical language that the "*Malāikah* (cosmic forces) prostrated themselves before Adam (man)" (2 : 34). Man, as the verses quoted below show, occupies a privileged position in the physical world and it is his destiny to become master of it :

> God has pressed into the service of man the sun and the moon, to perform their courses, and He has pressed the night and the day into his service (14 : 33).

Again:

> And He hath of service unto you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth ; it is all from Him. Lo ! herein verily are portents for people who reflect (45 : 13).

If we reflect on the physical world we find that it is governed by unalterable laws, and by discovering these laws we can subjugate everything in it and make it serve our purposes. The destiny of man lies not in turning away from nature but in making it obey his will.

The physical world, the Qur'ān asserts, is not a shadow or *maya*. It is real and not merely an appearance. "And We created not the heaven and the earth and all that is between them in vain" (38 : 27). They are in error who refuse to ascribe reality to the seen world. "That is the opinion of those who do not believe (in the truth)" (38 : 27). It is these people who consider the world to be an illusion. If it is an illusion, it means that it has no meaning. Islam rejects this view as utterly false and *kufr*. The Qur'ān says that the universe was created *bil Ḥaqq*, which means that it is true and has a purpose. "Allah created the heavens and the earth with *Ḥaqq*" (29 : 44). It is the duty of the faithful, *Mu'mins*, therefore, to observe the truth spread out before their eyes. "Therein is indeed a portent for believers" (29 : 44). We are left in no doubt as regards the reality of the universe. It is not (as believed by Hindus) *Rama's Leela*, a toy with which God amuses Himself for a moment, nor is it *Brahma's* dream. In either case it would have had no serious purpose and would have vanished as God woke up or turned to some serious work. The Qur'ān rejects these views as false:

> And we created not the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in play. We created them not save with *Ḥaqq* (44 : 38-39).

III. Knowledge

The Qur'ān distinguishes between two kinds of knowledge—perceptual and conceptual. Through perceptual knowledge we become aware of and deal with that portion of the physical environment which happens at the moment to be the centre of our interest. Through conceptual knowledge we rise above the particularity of concrete facts and cognise the unities which underlie the multiplicity of the world. The conceptual framework we build up is far removed from the rich vivid concrete reality of the actual world, yet it gives us an insight into the working of the nature and greater power of control over it. The point to note is that both kinds of knowledge have their source in the senses. In the Platonic theory of knowledge, reason can achieve knowledge of the Real independently of the senses. The Qur'ān accords full recognition to the role of the senses in the "knowing activity." According to the Qur'ān, the mind (*fuād*) gropes for knowledge from the data provided by the senses.

We see that the Qur'ānic view is close to, if not identical with, the empirical theory of knowledge. The Qur'ān exhorts man to use his senses and observe nature sagaciously. This is the first step in getting to know nature and its way :

> And follow not that whereof thou hast no knowledge. Lo ! the hearing and the sight and the *fuād* (heart)—of each of these it will be asked (17 : 36).

Those who do not make proper use of their senses and mental powers sink to the animal level. "Many of the people, both civilised and nomads, live a life which dooms them to hell" (7 : 179). The reason for this is that "they have hearts wherewith they understand not, have eyes wherewith they see not, and have ears wherewith they hear not" (7 : 179). The result is that they cease to be rational beings. "These are like cattle : nay, but they are worse. These are the neglectful" (7 : 179).

In sharp contrast to such people are those who ponder over God's creation, for they know that "In the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day, are surely signs to men of understanding" (3 : 189). They are the men "who keep in their mind (the laws of) Allah standing and sitting and reclining, and reflect on the creation of the heavens and the earth" (3 : 190). When they reflect on the grandeur of nature, they are deeply moved and exclaim : "Our *Rabb* ! Thou hast not created this in vain" (7 : 190). When they approach nature with the attitude of the believers (*Mu'mins*) they feel it in their bones that it has a meaning and a purpose. With their intellectual honesty, they cannot but admit that certain things in it are incomprehensible to them at the present level of their knowledge. With humility they confess that they do not know, but they have a conviction that if they persist in seeking more knowledge, one day they will perceive the meaning of these as well. Men who lack this conviction live "in a sort of hell" (7 : 191), and the pity is that "no one can help them" (7 : 191).

The Qur'ān speaks of those who study nature and try to discover the laws that govern it as "men of knowledge and insight" ; because, says the Qur'ān : "Lo ! in the heavens and the earth are portents for believers" (45 : 3). In seeking knowledge, the believers are spurred on by their *Īmān*. "And in your creation and of all the beasts that He scattereth in the earth, are portents for a folk whose *Īmān* is sure" (45 : 4). They know that :

> The alternation of night and day and the provision that Allah sendeth down from the sky and thereby quickeneth the earth after her death, and the ordering of the winds, are portents for a people who have sense (45 : 5).

The *Rasūl* is told :

> These are the portents of Allah which We recite unto thee with *Ḥaqq* (45 : 6).

Īmān in God may not follow from purely logical arguments : it springs from the direct experience of order,

harmony and beauty in nature. The Qur'ān says that these are the visible signs of the invisible Being:

Then in what besides Allah and His portents will they believe? (45 : 6).

According to the Qur'ān, *Īmān* in God has a dual source. Contemplation of the outer world of nature and of man himself guides us to the power that manifests itself in both. By insisting that nature provides a pathway to God, the Qur'ān concedes the validity of the so-called "natural religion." It adds, however, that *Īmān* induced by the contemplation of nature, should be reinforced by Revelation. It is the confluence of the two streams of influence that produces the *Īmān* of a true believer, the *Mu'min.* The unbeliever, the *Kafir*, is one whose mind is arid because it has not been irrigated by either stream. *Īmān* is not a passive assent to a dogma. It is the vivid sense of God's laws which set every fibre in the body vibrating in unison with the infinite power immanent in the universe. When *Īmān* is actually expressed in a way of life, and when it inspires and informs the conduct of man, it is called *Taqwa*, in the language of the Qur'ān. The *Mu'min*, armed with *Īmān* and *Taqwa*, can defy every destructive power:

Verily, in the alternation of night and day and in what God has created in the heavens and the earth, are surely signs to people who abide by Allah's laws and wish to be protected against destructive powers (10 : 6).

Drawing our attention to the starry firmament above, the Qur'ān kindles in our mind a sense of its infinitude. In contemplating the heavens we are contemplating the infinite. Therein we have a value experience of a high order, composed of curiosity, wonder, awe, reverence, and feelings of sublimity and beauty. Who knows but there may be life and reason in some of the countless galaxies in the infinity of space:

And of His signs is the creation of the heaven and the earth, and what He has spread abroad *in both of them* of living things; and He has the power to gather them together (according to His plans) (42 : 29).

IV. Men of Knowledge

We have seen that the Qur'ān attaches prime importance to the acquisition of knowledge. We have also noted that the Qur'ān applies the term "knowledge" neither to something which mere intellect produces out of itself nor to the sense-data collectively, but to the product of the interaction of the senses and intellect. We can now ask whom does the Qur'ān regard as men of knowledge—*'Ulamā*. A clue is provided by the verses quoted below:

> Hast thou seen that Allah causeth water to fall from the sky and produces therewith fruit of diverse hues, and among the hills are streaks white and red, of diverse hues and others raven-black.
>
> And of men and beasts and cattle in like manner diverse hues. It is the *'Ulamā*—men of knowledge—among His servants who (reflecting upon the magnitude of the creation and the Divine laws governing it) feel awe and are wonder struck (35 : 27-28).

We find in these verses a clear reference to generic sciences. The men of knowledge are, therefore, those who have acquired knowledge of these natural phenomena, that is, they are the men whom we now call scientists. The sphere of work of the *'Ulamā* is the science of man and nature. It is obvious that the "Muslim 'Ulamā" have since long, relinquished their proper object of study and have applied their keen intellect to matters of far less importance. Absorbed in matters relating to ritual and ceremonial, which are the adjuncts of institutional religion, they could not spare the time to observe and study nature as they had been commanded to do by God. Instead of ranging over the wide expanse of the world of nature, their mind moved in a narrow circle with the result that it has lost its vigour and flexibility. It is high time they turned their attention to the proper object of study—the signs and portents of God, the varied phenomena of nature and the human mind:

> And We shall show them Our portents on the horizons and within their own selves, until it will be manifest unto them that it is *Ḥaqq* (41 : 53).

Our *Īmān* grows *pari passu* with our knowledge. As the hidden order and harmony of nature are revealed to us, we believe that the Qur'ān enshrines truth. We believe that "He has sent it (the Qur'ān) Who knows the secrets in the heavens and the earth" (25 : 6). We should therefore, reflect on "His signs as manifested in the *Anfus* (human selves) and *Āfāq* (the physical world)" (41 : 53), in order to have a clear vision of the manifestation of His law of creation. The more intimate our contact with nature, the deeper is our insight into the working of the Divine Law that guides the universe in its progress towards its goal.

The objection may be raised at this point that the view we have been expounding is nothing but a brand of naturalism with theism grafted into it. By calling on the *'Ulamā*, who are "divines," to engage in scientific research, we are making them mere men of science and asking them to relinquish their proper field which is "religion." We agree that in the context of what goes as "religion" it would be sacrilegious to ask the "divines" to turn to scientific research. But Islam is not a "religion," it is *dīn*, and *dīn* is a balanced amalgam of worldly and godly affairs. To conquer the forces of nature and utilise them for the benefit of mankind in accordance with permanent values as laid down by Revelation, is *dīn*. You have to master the forces of nature first before you can make any good use of them. Science is not only an ally but a prerequisite of *dīn*. If persons who claim to be scholars of *dīn* are strangers to its spirit and are content in their ignorance of scientific knowledge, they can serve no interest of *dīn*. They should allow the winds of science to blow freely over their minds. Scientific knowledge will deepen their insight into *dīn* as it is the knowledge of "the signs and portents of God." This pregnant Qur'ānic phrase means that the knowledge of the sign—nature—is prelude to the knowledge of God to whom it points.

This will be possible only if the basic (prevalent) concept of Islam is changed and it is taken out of the realm of "religion." This, unfortunately, our *'Ulamā*

consider *Irtidād* (apostasy). So let us proceed further.

As regards nations who have gained mastery over the forces of nature but who do not utilise them in the light of the Divine Law—permanent values—they too cannot evade the doom that awaits them. Says the Qur'ān:

> And verily We had empowered them (nations of the past) with that wherewith We have not empowered you, and had assigned them ears and eyes and hearts, but their ears and eyes and hearts availed them not since they rejected the revelations of Allah, and what they used to mock befell them (46 : 26).

The main points to note are:

(1) People engaged in understanding and controlling the forces of nature and shaping their lives according to the Divine Law are *Mu'mins* and *Muttaqīs*. They enjoy happiness in this world and will enjoy it in the next stage of life.

(2) Those who achieve the conquest of nature but use their power for purposes opposed to the Divine Order are rewarded with success in this world for the time being, but have nothing to hope for in the future.

(3) Those who turn away from nature and make no attempt to understand and conquer it, cannot attain human stature. They live a life of hardship and misery in this world and will find the way to progress blocked in the next world, for:

> Who is blind here, will be blind in the Hereafter, and yet farther away from the true path (17 : 72).

Conquering the forces of nature and utilising them for the benefit of mankind in accordance with the Laws of God as revealed by Him, and thereby developing one's own self, is the essence of Islam. This, and this alone, can ensure a beautiful heavenly life in this as well as in the Hereafter. This way of life is called *dīn*.

Chapter XVIII

WOMAN

I. Man and Woman—A Comparative Study

For ages, men did not treat the women-folk with justice and fairness. That woman was inferior to man in intelligence, was, for long, regarded as a self-evident truth. All the dull and uninteresting tasks were, therefore, assigned to her. In the civilisation man built up, woman had to be content with an inferior role. It is only recently that woman has begun to assert her rights and claim equality with man. Though the intellectual climate of the present age is generally favourable to woman's demand for equality, the question of its validity has not quite emerged from the smoke of the controversy.

No doubt, there are differences between man and woman, but they are in fact far fewer than those which used to be quoted. Even these few are largely biological. A potent difference is that in physical prowess. The male surpasses the female not so much in his capacity for endurance as in the intensity of his muscular action. He generally runs faster and punches harder. His red blood corpuscles which carry oxygen from the lungs to the muscles are ten percent more abundant than those of the female. Then her feminine (biological) peculiarities and maternal duties not only consume her energies to no inconsiderable extent, but also confine her indoor for long periods. All these factors supposedly keep her weaker of the two. Hence the tasks demanding great physical strength or regular out-door activities, such as fighting and hunting, were naturally assigned to the man, while

the woman generally took over the lighter and domestic tasks, such as cooking and washing. As physical strength was an essential value for a primitive group constantly threatened by other hostile groups, man soon secured for himself a dominant position in the tribal set up. As this state of affairs continued for long ages, men consolidated their position of dominance and ruled over the women-folk with a high hand. Gradually women were reduced to the position of serfs.

The truth slowly dawned on man's mind that he had over-estimated the value of physical strength and military prowess. He realised that other abilities are equally valuable. In modern society, intelligence is valued more than bodily strength. The psychologists tell us that woman is man's equal in intelligence and some other abilities. Man is superior to woman in some abilities but inferior to her in others. For instance, he excels her in mechanical skill while she surpasses him in linguistic ability.

It is now generally admitted that woman is, on the whole, man's equal. Nevertheless, deep down in her unconscious, the inferiority complex handed down from the immemorial past is firmly lodged. In the advanced countries of Europe and America, women are working shoulder to shoulder with men in the fields of science, industry and administration, but they too are impelled by an unconscious urge to make themselves attractive to men. The greater part of the money they earn is wasted on dress, make-up and finery. All the time they can spare, they devote to beautifying themselves. Obviously their main purpose is to make themselves fascinating and glamorous. This is because women have been told all the time, on religious authority, that God originally created man and woman was created subsequently because man felt lonely. She is, therefore, driven to the belief that she does not exist for herself but only to fulfil the wishes of man: hence her unconscious desire to become as attractive to man as possible.

The inferiority complex from which woman suffers has its roots in the remote past. The social framework which has remained basically unchanged assigned to her a status much lower than that of man. Man regarded her occasionally as a goddess, usually as a slave, but rarely as a comrade. In this man-made society, the dice were heavily loaded against her. The powerful forces of custom, law and religion were ranged against her. She could not own property in her own right. She could not choose her own mate. The father could give her in marriage to any one he liked. If the husband died even when she was still young, she was not permitted to remarry. Widowhood was her lot for the rest of her life. Sometimes she was even expected to die with her husband. The barbarous custom of *Sati* required her to sit on the funeral pyre of her dead husband and be burnt alive. Religion too was not kind to her. The Biblical story of Adam and Eve is hardly fair to her. It is said that God first created Adam, and then, out of his rib, He created Eve. The rib is crooked and so devout men were quite prepared to admit the same crookedness in the nature of woman. The sequel of the story shows that woman is not only crooked but also weak. She quickly succumbed to the seductions of Satan and tempted Adam into sin. The story of Adam and Eve, in which Eve plays the role of a temptress, is widely believed in throughout the Christian world. The attitude of the Christians towards women is, therefore, tinged with fear and hostility. To preserve their purity, devout men thought it necessary to avoid all contact with women. Marriage was looked upon as a necessary evil. Celibacy came to be regarded as a virtue. Woman was a hindrance to spiritual progress so, at least the priest, whose sole concern was the soul, had to remain unmarried.

Such ideas have been in vogue for centuries and, until recently, were to be found in all parts of the world. The Qur'ān completely changed man's attitude towards woman. It placed the relation between man and woman on a basis of equality, exalting neither over the other.

The Qur'ān does not say that man was created first and so has precedence over woman. It tells us that for every one, life originated from a mono-cell. The distinction between male and female came at a later stage, and when it appeared, both of them were very much there:

> God created you from a single life-cell and from it created its mate (for man a woman and for woman a man) and from them twain, has spread abroad a multitude of men and women (4 : 1).

Thus, in the matter of creation, neither had any preferential treatment; nor was woman responsible for man's first act of disobedience and his consequent expulsion from paradise. Both are said to have been led astray by Satan (2 : 36). According to the Qur'ānic view, man and woman are equally capable of following the right path and equally liable to fall into destructive ways. Of course, they are not absolutely the same: in some things men are superior while in others women surpass them. It is a necessary consequence of the fact that their roles in life are complementary to each other. They are equal in worth although different in particular qualities:

> God has so created you that one excels the other (in certain respects) (4 : 34).

Not that man excels woman but one excels the other in certain respects and is surpassed by the other in other respects. For thousands of years, man has told woman that she is inferior to him not only in physical strength but also in intelligence and other abilities. Only recently has she realised that she can equal man in many walks of life. The Qur'ān instills into her mind ideas of her essential worth and her own capacity. The Qur'ān liberated woman from her age-long bondage to man. It says:

> If men have the potentiality to develop their personality by harmonising themselves with the Laws of Allah, then women also have a similiar potentiality; if men can be members of a movement that aims at world peace according to the inviolable Laws of Allah, then women also can participate in it by becoming its members; if men can restrain their capabilities so as to develop them within the

Laws of Allah, so can women; if men can vindicate the truth of their conviction through its practical implementation in life, so can women vindicate it; if men can remain steadfast on the path they have chosen, so can women; if men have the inexhaustive capacity to be more and more in harmony with the Laws of Allah once they are set on this path, so have women this inexhaustible capacity; if men can sacrifice lower values for higher values, so can women; if men can exercise control and do not violate the limitations set on them, so can women; if men can keep their sexual urge within the desired limits, so can women; if men can understand the Laws of Allah and focus their activities in life on them, so can women. Now if both men and women have equal capacities and potentialities, their results should also be the same for both of them. Hence both will enjoy protection and security, and all other such benefits and joy that will come out of their deeds (33 : 35).*

This verse puts it beyond doubt that men and women are equal in all things that really matter in social activities. The path of progress is open to both alike and the reward for achieving it is the same for both:

> And whoso does good work, whether male or female, and he (or she) is a Believer, such will enter *Jannah* and they will not be wronged so much as the dint in a date-stone (4 : 124).

The Qur'ān also leaves no doubt in the matter of her right to possess:

> What man earns will be his and whatever the woman earns will belong to her (4 : 32).

It will thus be seen that Qur'ān treats man and woman as equals in all respects. The fact is that mankind will attain human stature only when it speaks about man and woman in terms of human beings, and not with reference to sex distinction. Woman (like man) has her own personality, and the relation of personality to personality cannot be a relation of means and end; all personality is an end in itself.

II. Woman (Mother)

The rudiments of family life are also found even in the animal world. The young of most animals are helpless when they are born and cannot survive if they are left to

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* *Mafhūm-ul-Qur'ān*, (by the author).

themselves. The task of looking after them is performed sometimes by the female and, in some cases, by both together. Among the birds, male and female participate in bringing up the young. In some kinds of fish, the female is indifferent to the young, while the male provides for them and protects them from danger. Among mammals, care of the young is the chief concern of the female. Some animals, however, let their young fend for themselves at an early age. The human infant remains helpless and in need of parental care for a much longer period. The protracted infancy of the human child necessitates close association of parents with the children over a number of years. In this close companionship, tender emotions germinate and develop. Strong ties of love and affection bind the parents and children closely and permanently. Home is the stage on which the members of the family play their respective roles. Home symbolises happiness, peace, security and mutual sympathy. It is the field for satisfying social contacts and fruitful co-operation. Under parental care, the individual not only attains physical maturity but also becomes a humanised and socialised being. The family is the matrix in which his personality is shaped and moulded. Membership of the family prepares him for membership of society. Society is only the family enlarged. By virtue of the training he has received in sympathy, tolerance and co-operation, he takes his rightful place in society as a free and responsible person.

The family is all-important to the human child, and, in the family, the major role is played by the mother. One cannot over-emphasise the influence she exercises over her children. She inspires in them the ideals and imparts to them the culture of her society. It mainly depends on her whether they will become useful members of the society or will be only misfits therein.

The Qur'ān fully recognises the mother's vital role in the family and in society. The Qur'ānic term for the community of Muslims is *Ummah*, and is derived from *Umm*, which means mother. The mother influences the

family directly and the community indirectly, but not less effectively.

The child develops a balanced personality only when peace reigns in the home atmosphere and there is harmony and concord between the parents. Discord between the parents is the main cause of personality disorders in children. The Qur'ān, therefore, advises man to choose a congenial mate who shares his views and ideals and is in agreement with him on all important matters (2 : 221). Marriage is a contract freely entered into by both man and woman. The woman is, therefore, absolutely free to marry any one she likes. Man cannot marry a woman against her will (4 : 19). It is the duty of the married couple to provide a happy home for their children.

As the woman has to devote most of her time to the care of children, the duty of providing them with the means of subsistence, obviously, falls on man. This division of labour is in the interest of the whole family:

> Men are responsible for the maintenance of women (in the home) (4 : 34).

If, however, a woman can spare the time to earn her own living, she is free to do so. Whatever she earns belongs to her (4 : 32). Man and woman are equal partners to work as a team in running the home. Neither of them should try to dominate and exploit the other. Woman's rights are to be respected as much as man's. The husband cannot encroach on the rights of his wife:

> Women have rights against men like as men have rights against them in reason and law (2 : 228).

The relationship between husband and wife has to be closer and reciprocal:

> They are raiment for you and you are raiment for them (2 : 187).

As stated above, marriage is a contract entered into by voluntary agreement of the partners. It is a solemn contract. It can still be annulled, but for good reasons when there is no way out and all attempts to save it have

failed. Even when such a situation arises, the husband and wife should try to save the contract by an agreeable compromise. When this attempt has also failed, the society should intervene to bring about a reconciliation. They —the husband and the wife—should each choose a representative, and the representatives should try to settle the dispute in an amicable way (4 : 35). If their efforts too are fruitless, the marriage may be formally dissolved.

As we have already seen, the purpose of marriage is to create and live in an atmosphere of love, harmony and companionship to fulfil the higher purpose of life. The idea of a man having more than one wife at a time does not fit into the purposeful scheme of such a partnership. Monogamy—one man with one woman—is, therefore, the normal rule according to the Qur'ān. There might, however, arise an occasion in which a relaxation of this rule becomes a necessity in the over-all interest of the society. For instance, prolonged war may reduce considerably the number of young men in the society thereby leaving a large number of widowed women, generally with children, and unmarried girls unprovided for. These women and girls must be protected and looked after in the fulfilment of their human needs without hurting or undermining their dignity and honour. Establishing orphanages, or "old age homes," or even making these destitutes otherwise economically independent, is no remedy. Obviously, the problem is not economic only: it is much wider and deeper. It would be for the society to handle this delicate situation protecting the individual dignity of those affected, as well as the moral fabric of the society. For this, the Qur'ān has suggested a feasible alternative by relaxing the rule of monogamy:

> And if you fear that it will not be possible to find an equitable solution of the problem of widows and orphans in the society otherwise, then marry from amongst them those who seem suitable, by twos, threes or fours (as the situation demands), but if you fear that you will not do justice, then marry only one (4 : 3).

This is the only verse in the Qur'ān that bears on the question of polygamy. It will be observed from the concluding portion thereof that even where a State does make this relaxation, it is still not obligatory on men to take more than one wife. They may marry only if they can do justice. It is obvious that if a man marries in such an abnormal situation, it will be as a service to the nation, both on his part and the part of his first wife. She will consider it her duty to provide shelter to one of her unfortunate sisters who has been driven to such a pitiable condition through no fault of her own. It may be argued that we will rarely find a woman who will agree to a rival being brought into her home. The argument may seem valid in the present pattern of life wherein personal interests come first. But it looses its ground in the revolution of ideas brought about by the Qur'ān in which:

> The believers prefer others over themselves though they might have to undergo hardships (59 : 9).

History tells us that in the Qur'ānic society in Madinah at the time of the *Rasūl*, such a new-comer to the house of a Muslim, in the circumstances stated above, was greeted with blessings by those already in it. The new-comers also did not enter the house as rivals: they were rather laden with a sense of gratitude. This was the result of the change which *Īmān* brought about in their heart.

The principle embodied in the verse cited above was exemplified in the life of the *Rasūl* himself. When he was twenty five, he married *Khadījah*, a widow who was much older than him. For twenty five years she was his only wife. He remarried only after her death. The conditions in which he took to himself more than one wife were such as are specified in the verse to which we have referred. The small Muslim community settled in Madinah was constantly at war with enemies on all sides. War takes a heavy toll on the youth of a country. There was a sharp decrease in the number of men. Besides this, there was an influx of refugees, mostly women, from

Mecca. The large number of widows and unmarried girls created a problem for the Muslims. It was a situation fraught with danger and a drastic remedy had to be applied. It was in such an emergency that polygamy was permitted to give protection to the unprotected women-folk by giving them safety and social status. Those for whom the *Rasūl* himself provided a home in this way are briefly described below:

Saudah and her husband had fled from the persecution of the Quraish and taken refuge in Abyssinia. On the death of her husband, she was left absolutely helpless.

Ḥafṣah was the daughter of 'Umar and the widow of Khunais. Khunais was killed in the battle of *Uḥud*. As she was in distress, 'Umar tried to give her in marriage to one of his friends but did not succeed. He approached another friend but he too was unwilling to marry her. The *Rasūl* came to the help of 'Umar and provided a home for her.

Zainab. Her third husband too was killed in the battle of *Uḥud*. She was left destitute. She was, therefore, taken under protection by the *Rasūl*, but she died two months after.

Umm Salamah. With her husband she had sought refuge in Abyssinia. After their return, her husband was killed in the battle of *Uḥud*. She was in great distress when the *Rasūl* came to her rescue.

Zainab II. She belonged to the family of the *Rasūl*. Her husband, who had been once a slave had divorced her. As the wife of an erstwhile slave, her social position had been lowered in the general estimation. To bring home to the society at large that this traditional attitude was repugnant to the spirit of Islam, the *Rasūl* himself chose her for marriage, demonstrating thereby that no one loses caste by entering into matrimony with a freed slave.

Umm Ḥabībah. She was the daughter of Abū Sufyān, one of the leaders of the Quraish. She had migrated to

Abyssinia with her husband. Her husband embraced Christianity and deserted her. She returned home but no one from her family would welcome her and give her protection. The *Rasūl* gave her status and a home.

Maimūnah. When her second husband died in Mecca, she was left penniless. The *Rasūl* provided her with a home by giving her a legal status.

Juwairiyah was also a widow. Her husband had been killed in a battle. She was the daughter of the tribal chief of Bani Muṣṭaliq.

Ṣafiyyah's father, brother and husband had all been killed in the war. She had no one to support her.

'Ā'ishah was the only virgin whom the *Rasūl* married. He had married her before he migrated to Madinah, when she was about 19 years old.

The facts speak for themselves. With the solitary exception of *'Ā'ishah*, the women whom the *Rasūl* married were all elderly widows, homeless and friendless. (The Qur'ān does not specify the number of wives the *Rasūl* had at a time). Social life was in a chaotic condition and he had to make economic adjustments. As the war continued, the small community had neither the time nor the resources to provide home and subsistence to the widows and orphans. When conditions reverted to the normal, the *Rasūl* offered to divorce them if they so desired. They rejected the offer and remained with him.

III. Slave Girls

Before the advent of Islam, slavery prevailed all over the world. To men in those days, it seemed perfectly normal for the strong and wealthy to have slaves whom they had captured in war or purchased in the market. The Greeks were the leaders of thought in the ancient world. No Greek thinker had ever raised his voice against the institution of slavery. The Qur'ān proclaimed the equality of all men in the sight of God. It struck at the root of slavery by recognising the moral worth of man

as man. However, there were, at the time of the advent of Islam, numerous slaves, both men and women, in Arabia as elsewhere in the world. The Arab economy was based on slavery. To abolish it at one stroke was impracticable. It could not be done without plunging the whole society into confusion. Yet, in every conceivable way, the Qur'ān discouraged slavery and improved the lot of the slaves. The Muslims were urged to be kind and considerate to their slaves. They were told that to emancipate a slave was a meritorious act. They could atone for some of their offences by setting a slave free. Thus the number of slaves was gradually reduced and society was made less dependent on slave labour. The words "whom your right hand possessed" occuring in the Qur'ān are in the past tense and refer to those who had already been enslaved. When they were emancipated through a gradual process, slavery died a natural death. The main source of slaves—men and women—was prisoners in war. The Qur'ān laid down that they should be set free either for a ransom or as a favour (47 : 4). The door for future slavery was thus closed by the Qur'ān for ever. Whatever happened in subsequent history, was the responsibility of the Muslims and not of the Qur'ān.

Islam brought about a revolution in human relations placing master and slave, man and woman, on a footing of equality before God. In Arabia, as in most other countries, man had been accustomed to look on women just for the gratification of his lust. Marriage was a device to prevent men from quarrelling for the possession of desirable women. The Qur'ān raised the status of women in society and made them equal partners of men in the enterprise of living.

IV. Sex and Society

The sex urge is part of the instinctual equipment of man and woman. The continuity of the race is ensured by the individual's desire to engage in procreative activity. It is the means by which the torch of life is

carried forward. In the classical classification of instincts on the basis of the ends they subserve, the sex urge belongs to the class of instincts of race preservation.

It is now generally admitted that the sex motive is a powerful determinant of human behaviour. For a long time, however, under the influence of puritanism and rationalism, the sex life of man was not considered worthy of serious study. In good society, the subject was scrupulously eschewed. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, a reaction set in and the fashion now is to exaggerate its importance in human life. Some psychologists, led by Freud, regard it as basic in "human nature" and ubiquitous in human life. The psycho-analyst digs up the sex motive in such simple activities as eating and playing. He tries to lift the veil from sex and discovers it in unexpected places. The mathematician pondering over lines and curves and the mystic absorbed in meditation may both be satisfying the same urge, though in different ways. Libidinal energy, repressed and diverted into socially approved channels, creates culture and civilisation.

The Western people, it would seem, have swung from the extreme of cold indifference to sex to the opposite extreme of intense preoccupation with it. The Qur'ān steers a middle course. It assigns to sex its rightful place in life but no more. In this attitude it is supported by science. Experimental studies of animal behaviour show that the sex drive, though a strong one, is by no means the strongest. It is weaker than hunger and thirst. It is also weaker than the parental instinct.

Another point to be noted in this connection is that man cannot live without food or water for more than a few days. But the satisfaction of the sex urge may be post-poned indefinitely without injury to his physical or mental health. Some great men have led a perfectly normal life without sex indulgence. Celibacy has been the normal way of life for some men. It would seem that the energy of the sex drive is displaceable and can be diverted into other channels.

There is another angle also. An excessive indulgence in matters other than sex will harm the intemperate man himself. But misbehaviour in sex will also have concern for society at large. Sex love being monopolistic would give rise to the strong and sometimes uncontrollable forces of rivalry and jealousy which are so destructive for the society.

It is necessary to call attention to another aspect of sex. Sex primarily subserves the biological end of race preservation but the activity to which it leads is eminently pleasurable to the individual also. It is nature's device to induce the individual to engage in an activity which is mainly beneficial to the race and not to the individual. Man, however, values sex for his personal pleasure it yields. This pleasure becomes his main goal. For the sake of enjoying it, he artificially stimulates his sex appetite and so perverts it and deflects it from its natural end. Sex, thus, becomes an impediment to man's progress in self-realisation.

If the considerations urged above are borne in mind, we can understand and appreciate the Qur'ān's attitude to sex. We will see that the restrictions it has imposed on sex expression are perfectly reasonable and in the best interests of the human species. Of course, the sex behaviour of man has been regulated in every society. The Qur'ān, however, never loses sight of the biological end of the sex drive. Some great religions have taught that sex is essentially evil and that "spiritual" progress is only possible in celibacy. The Qur'ān rejects this view and regards the sex urge as a natural appetite which may be gratified, albeit, in moderation and under conditions in which it does no harm to any one who is affected thereby. In the West, adultery is penalised but not fornication. The Qur'ān forbids all sexual relations outside of marriage. Man is permitted to have such relations only with his lawful wife. Even here, he is warned against making pleasure his goal. He is advised to keep in mind that he is helping to bring into existence a responsible rational being. For years, he will have to

devote himself to the task of bringing up and educating his son or daughter so that he or she eventually becomes a useful member of the society. If it is not possible for him to give his child a fair start in life, he should not have begotten him. The Qur'ān seeks to instil a sense of responsibility into the minds of both partners engaged in an activity which will lead to the production of a new being. They are admonished to look beyond the immediate pleasure and realise the responsibility they are undertaking. Pleasure is permissible, but it is wrong to become a slave to it. The Qur'ān tells man that he can and should control his sex drive and attend to it moderately, thinking seriously of the duties that will devolve on him in consequence of it.

V. *Chastity*

Consistent with this view, the Qur'ān lays particular stress on chastity. It is regarded as a cardinal virtue and as such helps forward the moral and mental progress of man. Chastity is essential for moral purity and mental health. The Freudian theory of sex has, rightly or wrongly, encouraged men to think that sexual abstinence is harmful to mental health. It is supposed to be a fruitful cause of neurotic troubles. Those who hold this view are doing an injustice to Freud. He himself did not defend licentiousness. It is not sexual abstinence but repressed sexuality that produces neurotic disorders. This is what Freud actually taught. Some medical men who have only superficial knowledge of the psychoanalytic doctrine, actually advise their neurotic patients to overcome their sexual inhibitions and let themselves "go": no wonder that the patients sometimes get worse instead of getting better. Because of a constitutional bias the neurotics are obsessed with sex and are also prone to repression. Sexual abstinence does no appreciable harm to normal men. Rather, abstinence is conducive to mental health.

What a man is to do if circumstances do not permit him to marry? The Qur'ān advises him to guard his

chastity and to abstain from gratifying his sex appetite till it is possible for him to get a suitable mate:

> And let those who cannot find a match keep chaste till Allah enriches them by His grace (24 : 32).

The drives of hunger and thirst are imperative and must be satisfied under any circumstances. The satisfaction of the sex drive, however, can safely be postponed for a fairly long period, or even for ever. Unlike the drives of hunger and thirst, sex appetite never rouses itself: it is excitable by conscious volition. The point needs further elaboration. A man, even when busy and deeply absorbed in his work, will feel thirstily when his system needs water, irrespective of the fact whether he is conscious about the need or not. At first the feeling will be mild, but as time passes, it will become unbearable so much so that he will have to leave aside his work and attend to it if he wishes to survive. The same will hold good in the case of food. But the sex urge is quite different. It never becomes a compelling drive on its own unless it receives a stimulus, mental or physical. The most important exciting factor is the thought of sex itself which has to be held in check. This is why chastity is not a physiological or psychological impossibility. The Qur'ān, by emphasising the importance of chastity, also helps to solve population problem. Chastity is not only in extra-marital relationship, but even a married couple should turn towards the sex urge only when they are ready to welcome an addition to the family. This ideal will benefit both the body and the human self alike; and also make a sensible check on the growth of population. Today, with the current state of morals, this may seem a counsel of perfection. It is so only because the pursuit of pleasure is the dominant aim. Self-indulgence has dimmed the vision of the purpose of life which is to befit oneself for a higher plane of existence. The Qur'anic advice is meant for those who are alive to the demands of this purpose. It is not just a pious advice. The Qur'ān gives it a practical shape. The first thing is to cultivate the right attitude towards sex. The way to do this is to

bear in mind that the purpose of the sexual activity is procreation and not mere pleasure. It will exercise a moderating influence on passion and will engender a sense of responsibility in us. Knowledge of the possible consequences of our intended action will restrain us from acting thoughtlessly and so assuming duties which we cannot properly discharge. In animals, the sex impulses are controlled by nature and the sex drive arises only when nature wishes to bring about conception. Animals, therefore, cannot rear a "planned family." Man, on the other hand, possesses freedom of choice, including sexual matters, so that he may bring children into the world according to his own plans. He may, however, abuse his freedom and indulge in sex for the sake of pleasure, which results in accidental and unwanted births with all the misadjustments that follow for the individual as well as for society.

To save man from such a ruinous situation and to bring about, instead, healthy results, the Qur'ān asks us to practice self-control. If self-control is practised, the sex impulse can be directed into healthy channels. Needless to say that it will prove to be beneficial to the individual as well as to the society at large. It will strengthen the moral fibre of man and, at the same time, avert the danger of overpopulation.

To sum up, the Qur'ān seeks to regulate the sex behaviour of man in the following ways :

1. It asks man to keep his eye fixed steadily on the purpose of life. It assures him that he can achieve this purpose by pursuing absolute values.
2. It assures woman that she is not a tool for the sex gratification of man; that she too is a free, independent and rational being. "She is an end unto herself." Her aim in life should not be to make herself a source of temptation to men but to impart meaningful partnership.
3. The Qur'ān condemns lewdness, indecency, pornography and all things that excite and ponder to

the sex passion :

> Say, my *Rabb* forbiddeth indecencies, such of them as are apparent and such as are within (7 : 33).

4. It affirms the value of chastity and commands men and women equally to lead a pure and chaste life. It regards chastity as essential for the development of human personality, *both for man and woman.*

5. It reminds man of his duty to his children. He is enjoined to bring up his children properly, to educate them, to inculcate in their minds the human level of life (as against the animal level) and permanent values, and to give them a fair start in life.

Some modern writers, after an extensive study of the sex life of primitive as well as civilised men, have come to the conclusion that chastity is essential to the progress of humanity. J.D. Unwin of Cambridge University, has studied the sex life of some eighty primitive tribes and of sixteen civilised nations. He has set forth his views in his book *Sex and Culture.* In the Preface he writes :

> Briefly stated, my final conclusion is that the cultural behaviour of any human society depends, first, on the inherent nature of the human organism, and, secondly, on the state of energy into which, as the result of its sexual regulations, the society has arrived [1]

The conclusions he draws from his study of the primitive peoples are as follows :

1. That group was on the lowest level of culture in which sexual intercourse without marriage was openly permitted ;
2. the tribe in which there were some restrictions on sexual relations without marriage were on the middle level ; and
3. on the highest level were the tribes which insisted on pre-marital chastity.[2]

Summing up the results of his investigation, he says :

> I submit, therefore, that the limitation of the sexual opportunity must be regarded as the cause of the cultural advance.[3]

Again:

> No society can display social energy unless a new generation inherits a social system under which sexual opportunity is reduced to a minimum. If such a system be preserved, a richer and yet richer tradition will be created, refined by human entropy.[4]

Unwin's concluding remarks deserve careful consideration:

> If a vigorous society wishes to display its productive energy for a long time, and even for ever, it must re-create itself, I think, first by placing the sexes on a level of complete legal equality, and then by altering its economic and social organisation in such a way as to render it both possible and tolerable for sexual opportunity to remain at a minimum for an extended period, and even for ever. In such a case the face of the society will be set in the Direction of the Cultural Process; its inherited tradition would be continually enriched, it would achieve a higher culture than has yet been attained; by the action of human entropy its tradition would be augmented and refined in a manner which surpasses our present understanding.[5]

The Qur'ān, by granting to woman the status of a free responsible citizen, by placing the sexes on the level of complete legal equality, and by reducing sexual opportunity to the minimum, is only seeking to set up the conditions which find support from human research.

References

1. J.D. Unwin, *Sex and Culture*, p. xiv.
2. Ibid, pp. 300-325.
3. Ibid, p. 317.
4. Ibid, p. 414.
5. Ibid, p. 432.

CONCLUSION

Before concluding our dissertation, it would not be out of place, we hope, if we recapitulate in brief, what we have been discussing somewhat in detail concerning religion, its source, its various aspects and its implications in relation to mankind, the individual as well as the human society at large, in contradistinction to Islam as a *dīn*.

I. Religion and Dīn

A perusal of the foregoing chapters must have brought to light the basic fallacy and the fundamental misconception in taking Islam as one among the various religions prevailing in the world from time to time; and the unfairness of making an assessment of *dīn* on that basis. Furthermore, it is equally fallacious if we were to try to understand and grasp its meaning and its impact on human society from the standpoint of religion as commonly understood.

Religion, as such, is nothing more than a kind of private relationship between man and his Creator. We are not, at the moment, concerned with the nature of this relationship which has been amply described in books like William James' *The Varieties of Religious Experience.* Anyhow, whatever the nature and characteristics of such experience, it is admittedly the experience of an individual of a purely subjective character having no relation whatsoever with worldly affairs, nor could it be communicated from one to another. This private relationship between man and his Creator is essentially founded on the idea of salvation. Salvation is common to all religions, even to Buddhism which does not acknowledge the

existence of God. The idea of salvation was born out of the belief that man's sojourn on earth was one of bondage. How to extricate himself from that bondage thus became the main object of his life.

Islam on the other hand, is neither such a relationship between man and God, nor is it characterised by the experience of an individual of a subjective nature, but is essentially a "Code of Life," regulating the conduct of affairs concerning the individual as well as the collective life of human beings. Secondly, it does not consider man's life on earth a period of bondage in which case the idea of salvation does not arise. On the contrary, having assigned to man a very high position in the universe, Islam expects him to take up the challenge of life boldly in order to harness the forces of nature for the development of his own self and the larger community of mankind. The fallacy of considering Islam a religion springs from the fact that absolute "faith" in God is of fundamental importance to it, as it is supposed to be more or less so in all religions, past and present, but it is not only the "faith" in God that should serve as a criterion in arriving at a correct estimate of one or the other. The real question we should be concerned with is, what is the *concept* of God which is supposed to be the common factor?

II. Concept of God

Islam on its part, has presented a concept of God entirely at variance with the one advanced by the various religions of the world. Along with *Īmān* in God, the distinguishing feature of the Islamic concept lies in the belief that God did not merely create the universe, but has also laid down definite laws to regulate the scope and functions of the various objects comprising it. The "Law of Cause and Effect," and the "Law of Uniformity in Nature," among others, being of basic importance; and they deal with the external nature of the universe. He has, besides, prescribed definite laws regulating human life and its activities.

The knowledge of the Divine Laws relating to the external universe is derived from a close observation of nature, scientific experiments and discoveries, but not so in the case of laws relating to human life and the regulation of its conduct which are communicated only through Revelation to the *Rusul* and conveyed by them as Messengers of God to mankind. It is this wherein Islam as a *dīn* also distinguishes itself from the Material concept of life which takes no cognisance of the Divine Guidance by means of revelation.

Islam asserts that such Divine Laws have been, from time to time, communicated to all the peoples of the world. The *Rusul*, the Messengers of God, received them through revelation and delivered them to their people. What happened after the demise of a *Rasūl* was that his followers, chiefly their leaders having vested interests, tampered with the Laws with excision and deletion of what was found detrimental to their interests, and by interpolations, with the result that, from among the religions of the world, not one can produce the original text of Divine Revelation free from the taint of corruption. But these Divine Laws in their original form, words as well as letters, are fully extant and meticulously preserved in the Qur'ān, which is the last and the final of the series of the revealed Books of God, as was revealed to the last of the *Rusul*. So long as these Laws remain in their original form and pristine glory, they constitute what is termed as *dīn*, but when they are tampered with and corrupted, they fall from the high pedestal and become what is known as religion; and that is why among all the religions of the world only Islam deserves to be styled as a *dīn*. As a matter of fact, no other religion makes a claim, nor could it prove, even if it were to advance such a claim, that it possesses a revealed book word for word and letter for letter as delivered to them by their *Rasūl*. Islam, on the other hand, does make such a claim which is verified and fully supported by an impartial testimony of even non-Muslim historians.

Islam, thus, is a code of laws revealed by God,

through his *Rasūl*, Muḥammad (P), for the guidance of the whole of mankind, and which are fully preserved in the Book of God, known as the Qur'ān; and they constitute what we may call the Permanent Values. Further, Islam emphatically and confidently advances the claim that if life is led in full compliance with and in complete subordination to the Permanent Values, it will be rid of all the travails and troubles in which the entire world of the present day finds itself beset condemning humanity to a hellish life despite the wonderful and awe-inspiring material and scientific advancement. The order of life according to these Permanent Values is termed as the Qur'ānic Social Order, or, in other words, the Islamic State. It requires, however, to be made clear that every order of life established by the so-called Muslims, would not necessarily be the Islamic State as such, for, the Islamic State connotes only that State which is based on, and is in fullest consonance with the Permanent Values; and any other, lacking in this foundation, will be only un-Islamic, established though it may have been by the Muslims themselves. An Islamic State is thus an agency for the enforcement of Qur'ānic injunctions, and laws made in the light of the principles enunciated therein.

III. Permanence and Change

It should not, however, be misunderstood that the laws thus framed are rigid and hidebound with hardly any scope for progress or wanting in meting out the exigencies of the ever-changing conditions of life in the progressive world. In fact, the Islamic State is fully authorised, after mutual consultations, to legislate, within the framework of the Permanent Values, to provide for the needs of the time, and the body of laws thus promulgated could be altered and amended when necessary to suit the circumstances prevailing at a given time, with this essential proviso that in no circumstance shall the framework of the Permanent Values be disturbed or interfered with. From this point of view, the Islamic

State may be considered as a "controlled democracy," which is quite distinct in character from the concept of democracy commonly prevalent in the West, for, in that system the nation or its representatives enjoy an *unlimited* power of legislation.

IV. Human Personality

Another basic point of distinction between the Material concept of life and that of Islam is that, while in the former the life of a human being is circumscribed by and limited merely to man's physical existence in this world and is disintegrated and gets extinct with death, in the latter, the human body develops, flourishes, and eventually disintegrates under physical laws, but there is something else in man besides his body, that is, his Self or Personality, which is neither physical in its constitution nor is it subject to the physical laws as such. It is endowed to every human child in like measure at his birth, but it is only in an undeveloped form. To develop it to its full maturity and to give it a perfect and balanced shape is the goal of all human exertions. Every act of his performed in full compliance with the Permanent Values contributes to its development, and whatever is done against these values retards this process and weakens the Self. An act, it should be noted, includes the thought and intent as well. The Self or Personality, thus developed, easily sustains the shock of death and survives the disintegration and dissolution of the physical entity, and goes on developing further, passing through more evolutionary stages, which we may call the "Hereafter," or the "life after death." The idea that, not only the actual deeds of a human being but his thoughts and intentions as well act upon the human Personality, is what we call the "Law of Retribution" which is as inexorable and as immutable as the laws of nature.

From the foregoing it must have become clear that whoever believes in Self or the human Personality needs

no supervision of the police or directives from a court of law to persuade him to act in full consonance with the Permanent Values and lead a life in accordance with the principles emanating therefrom, for, such a man acts upon them of his own choice and accord, and scrupulously avoids other trends that go against them. Fully conscious as he is that such a course of conduct is conducive to his own good and welfare, he willingly and ardently desires to pursue it. It is only such people, therefore, as bring about and establish the Qur'ānic Social Order, believing, as they sincerely do, in the efficacy and well-being resulting from such an order of life ; and it is they who are entrusted with the task of modelling the society according to that Order.

The Permanent Values have been referred to several times in the foregoing chapters. Here we make a mention again of some of the more fundamental and basic ones, so as to demonstrate how individuals leading their lives in accordance therewith embellish and adorn not only their own character but of others as well, and how highly prosperous, peaceful and contented is that society in which these values operate consistently and predominently. How implicit a trust with sentiments of well-wishing other individuals and communities that come into contact will repose in them, and how an era of peace and prosperity will be ushered in when these values become universally recognised and acted upon—in fact the very life of *Jannah* on the earth. To usher in such an era, in short, is the ultimate aim of Islam.

V. Permanent Values

Now let us mention some of the more fundamental Permanent Values, summed up in brief needing little excuse for repetition.

1. *Respect for humanity in general.* The very fact that every human child at his birth is equally endowed with a Self or Personality, entitles every individual as a human entity to equal esteem and respect ; and no distinction

whatsoever should, therefore, be allowed to the incidence of birth, family, tribe, race or community, nationality, religion or sex, for, says the Qur'ān :

> Verily We have honoured all children of *Adam* (equally) (17 : 70).

2. *The criterion of a high position in society.* The intrinsic value of every individual human being is uniformly equal, but the criterion for determining the relative position and status of every individual rests on his own personal merits and character :

> And for all there are ranks according to what they do (46 : 19),

and the principle underlying is this:

> The noblest of you in the sight of Allah is the best in conduct (49 : 13).

3. *Unity in humanity.* All human beings, according to the Qur'ān, are the members of one brotherhood and branches of the same tree :

> Mankind is one community (2 : 213).

Racial distinction or dividing mankind into different compartments of communities and nations by drawing lines on the globe is antagonistic to the very idea of humanity as a single entity, and is against the intents and purpose of nature. There is only one criterion for a division and no other—that those who believe in the Permanent Values are members of one community, and those who care not for them and lead their lives against them, go to the other division of a different community, as is said in the Qur'ān :

> He it is Who created you (as human beings) but one of you rejects (the Permanent Values) and another believes (in them, so this is the only line of demarcation) (64 : 2).

4. *Human Personality implies responsibility.* It means to say that every human being will be held responsible for his own actions, rewards as well as retribution, which none else will share. Says the Qur'ān :

> Whoever commits a crime commits it against his own self (4 : 111),

and no other will be held responsible for it :

> No bearer of a burden bears another's burden (53 : 38).

This makes it quite clear that the notions of "original sin," or "intercession," or "penance" have no room whatsoever in Islam. That one should be made responsible for one's own deeds is, therefore, a Permanent Value according to the Qur'ān.

5. *Freedom.* According to the Qur'ān, every human being is born free, and, therefore, should ever remain free; and freedom means that none, whosoever he may be, can extort obedience from another human being. In the Islamic Society, only the Qur'ānic laws shall be obeyed. This is synonymous with the obedience of God, for very plainly asserts the Qur'ān :

> It is not right of any man that God should give him the Book and authority and (even) *Nubuwwah* and he should say to men "obey me instead of Allah" (3 : 78).

In fact, the Islamic Society is the agency for the execution of the Qur'ānic laws; and this constitutes the main criterion to distinguish between the Muslim and non-Muslim creed :

> And whoever judges not by what Allah has revealed, those are the unbelievers (5 : 44).

These provisions apply equally to all, no matter what his position. Not to speak of others, even the *Rasūl* of God was directed to proclaim :

> I follow not but what is revealed to me. Indeed I fear, if I disobeyed my *Rabb,* the chastisement of a grievous day (10 : 15).

It may be mentioned that what is *worship* in religion, is *obedience* to the laws of God in *dīn.*

6. *Freedom of will—no compulsion.* The responsibility for the act of a human being is determined by his own volition and intent, so much so, that if one is forced to believe something or is prevailed upon with force and compulsion against his will to act in a particular manner, he would not be held responsible for such belief or action,

for, *Īmān* is the other name for full *conviction.* Says the Qur'ān :

> There is no compulsion in *dīn* (2 : 256),

and in another place :

> And say : The truth is from your *Rabb,* so let him who pleases believe, and let him who pleases reject (18 : 29).

Physical compulsion and mental coercion apart, anything agreed to or followed traditionally or conventionally and not after due exercise of reason and intellect cannot be termed as *Īmān.* Accepting anything traditionally is, according to Qur'ān, the way of un-believers :

> And when it is said to them (the un-believers), "Follow what Allah has revealed," they say : "Nay, we follow that wherein we found our fathers." What ! Even though their fathers had no sense at all, nor did they follow the right path (2 : 170).

The believers, on the other hand, are those :

> Who, when (even) the messages of their *Rabb* are presented to them, they fall not thereat deaf and blind (25 : 73).

7. *Tolerance.* Islam not only tolerates followers of other religions but also bestows upon them all the rights of humanity, and solemnly undertakes to protect and guard their places of worship. Says the Qur'ān :

> And if Allah did not repel some people by others, cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques, in which Allah's name is oft remembered, would have been pulled down ; and surely Allah will help him who helps Him (in this regard) (22 : 40).

8. *Justice.* Justice is one of the fundamental Permanent Values (16 : 90), and no distinction is allowed in this respect between friend and foe, for, says the Qur'ān :

> And let not the hatred of a people incite you not to act equitably. Be just : that is nearer to observance of duty (5 : 8).

As regards the courts of justice, we have been very clearly guided by the Qur'ān :

(1) Confound not truth with falsehood (2 : 42).

(2) Nor knowingly conceal the truth (2 : 42).

(3) Hide not testimony (2 : 283).

(4) Evidence must be given truthfully (4 : 135).

(5) And be ye not an advocate for the fraudulent (4 : 105).

(6) And never be a supporter of the guilty (28 : 17).

(7) Be ye staunch in justice, witnesses for Allah, even though it be against yourselves or (your) parents or (your) kindred, whether (the case be of) a rich man or a poor man for, Allah is nearer unto both (than you are). So follow not passions lest ye lapse (from truth) and if ye lapse or fall away, then lo! Allah is ever informed of what ye do (4 : 135).

Crimes, according to the Qur'ān, are not only those that are actually and physically committed; it considers even the mere thought of a breach of the Permanent Values as an offence. No doubt, such offences do not fall within the jurisdiction of a court of law, nevertheless they are offences in the eye of the Divine Law of Retribution, and adversely affect the personality of the perpetrators, as has been said in the Qur'ān:

He knoweth the traitors of the eyes and that which the bosoms hide (40 : 19).

9. *Subsistence.* According to the Qur'ān, it is incumbent upon the Islamic society to provide for the basic necessities of each and all the members comprising it, and make suitable provisions for the development of their human potentialities. Thereafter, it should extend the same facilities to other human beings, and thus make the Order of *Rubūbiyyah* universal. A society that fails in this responsibility does not deserve to be called Islamic, for, the Islamic society that is established in the name of God is bound to proclaim:

We will provide for you and your children (6 : 152).

It is paramountly clear that no society could fully discharge this responsibility unless and until it has all the

means of production under its control and the necessary resources at its disposal. It is solely for this reason that means of production cannot be owned privately in Islam, nor could the produce of such means, or wealth, could form a private hoard (9 : 34-35).

For the same reason the principle underlying the growth and development of human personality is expressed thus: that an individual should work hard and earn and produce as much as possible, keep that is basically and essentially necessary for his own upkeep and of those for whom he is personally responsible, and give away the rest for meting out the necessities of others in need, as is ordained in the Qur'ān:

> And they ask thee as to what should they give (for the benefit of others). Say: "Whatever is surplus to your own requirements" (2 : 219),

and in this their attitude should be such as to declare:

> We desire from you neither reward nor thanks (76 : 9).

10. *Sex.* Chastity, according to Qur'ān, is one of the Permanent Values and its breach a grave offence (24-3). It demands its observance from men and women equally (24 : 30-31), and deems marriage as a free contract for leading a life of companionship and mutual co-operation in which both the parties stand on the same level and should be treated uniformly, for the Qur'ān makes no distinction between man and woman on the ground of sex. Both, *as human beings*, are like each other and equal in all respects:

> He it is Who has brought you (mankind) into being from one single life-cell (6 : 99).

11. *Aesthetic taste.* There is a basic difference between an animal and a human being, and that is that while the needs of an animal are confined to the mere satisfaction of physical wants, the requirements of man go beyond that. He is also endowed with the aesthetic sense, a liking, a taste for the appreciation of beauty. The Qur'ān respects

this leaning and tendency towards fine arts in the human species and considers it as a necessary element in the growth and development of his personality. It says:

> Say: "Who hath forbidden the adornment of Allah, which He hath brought forth for His servants and the good things of His providing"? (7 : 32).

Thus it gives full encouragement to the appreciation of beauty in its various phases of arts as well as objects, with the only proviso that the limits laid down in the Qur'ān are not transgressed.

12. *Forces of Nature.* You come across at several places in the Qur'ān with verses like this:

> And He has made subservient to you whatsoever is in the heavens and whatsoever is in the earth, all from Himself (45 : 13).

That is why Islam demands from us to subdue and harness the forces of nature with the sole object of utilising them in consonance with the Permanent Values for the benefit of the entire humanity, and never for destructive purposes, for, the basic principle underlying this is:

> Only that survives in the earth which is beneficial for entire mankind (13 : 17).

We have narrated above some of the basic values conveying the fundamental importance in human activity which have not only to be meticulously observed but to be carefully safeguarded by the Islamic Society against their breach and violation.

The Qur'ān does not ignore or neglect, rather it lays a great emphasis on meting out the demands of man's physical existence and the satisfaction of his requirements for his ease and comforts, of course, in close observance of the Permanent Values. If the needs of his physical life and other requirements are both satisfied in harmony and accord with the Permanent Values, no difficulty or a problem as such arises. When there is a tie or an apprehension of a clash between the two, the Islamic

view of life will then, as a matter of course, give preference to the maintenance of and compliance with the Permanent Values, for therein lies the loftiness of the human character. This way of life greatly contributes to the development and well-being of the human self. In the Material concept of life, on the other hand, the be all and end all of the entire human effort and activity is merely the satisfaction of the physical wants in luxury and plentitude without the least idea of the Permanent Values playing any role at all. This attitude is abhorent to Islam. Far from agreeing to accept it, Islam will, in no circumstances, even compromise with the Material concept. Further, the otherworldly view of religion, preaching contempt of the worldly life and its enjoyment and ignoring the physical wants, is equally unacceptable and hateful in its eyes.

VI. Comparison

A comparative study of religion or *madhhab*, and *dīn*, should help us understand the vital and fundamental characteristics of each and the differences between the two:

1. *Madhhab* is merely some sort of subjective experience and is concerned only with the so-called private relationship between God and man.

Dīn is an objective reality and a system of collective life.

2. Every follower of a *madhhab* is satisfied that he has established a communion with the Almighty, and the objective of each individual is his own salvation.

The aim of *dīn*, on the other hand, is the welfare and progress of all mankind, and the character and constitution of a society indicates whether or not it is founded upon the Divine Law.

3. *Madhhab* dces not afford us any objective criterion by which we could determine whether or not our actions are producing the desired results.

In a social order governed by *dīn*, the development of a collective and harmonious life correctly indicates whether or not the people are pursuing the right course.

4. *Madhhab* is hostile to scientific investigation and is an adversary of reason, so that it could flourish unhampered with the aid of a blind faith.

Dīn helps in the development of human reason and knowledge, allows full freedom to accept or reject on the basis of reason and arguments, and encourages investigation and discovery of all the natural phenomena to illumine the path of human life and its advancement in the light of the Permanent Values.

5. *Madhhab* follows the susceptibilities and prejudices of men and pampers them.

Dīn seeks to lead men to a path of life that is in harmony with the realities of life.

6. In every age, therefore, *madhhab* sets up new idols and mumbo-jumbos in order to keep the people's attention away from the real problems of life.

But *dīn* is rational and radical: it breaks all idols, old and new, and is never variable in its principles.

7. *Madhhab* induces a perpetual sense of fear in the minds of men and seeks to frighten them into conformity;

while *dīn* treats fear as a form of polytheism and seeks to make men courageous, daring and self-reliant.

8. *Madhhab* prompts men to bow before every seat of authority and prestige, religious as well as temporal.

Dīn encourages man to walk about with his head erect, and attain self-confidence.

9. *Madhhab* induces man to flee from struggle of life.

But *dīn* calls upon him to face the realities of life squarely, whatever the hazards.

10. *Madhhab* treats the world of matter with contempt and calls upon man to renounce it. It promises paradise only in the Hereafter as a reward for the renunciation of the material world.

Dīn, on the other hand, enjoins the conquest of matter and leads man to immeasurable heights of attainment. It exhorts him to seek well-being and happiness in this world as well as felicity in the life Hereafter.

11. *Madhhab* encourages belief in fatalism, and this tends to dissuade man from active life and self-development.

Dīn gives man power to challenge fate, and provides energy for a life of activity and self-development.

12. *Madhhab* seeks to comfort the weak, the helpless and the oppressed with the belief that the affairs of this world are governed by the Will of God and that its acceptance and resignation helps to endear them to God. This sort of teaching naturally tends to morbidity, and emboldens their religious leaders who profess to interpret the Will of God, so that they indulge in their misdeeds with perfect impunity and persuade the adherents to a complete and quiet submission.

Dīn, on the other hand, raises the banner of revolt against all forms of tyranny and exploitation. It calls upon the weak and the oppressed to follow the Divine Laws and thereby seek to establish a social order in which all tyrants and oppressors will be forced to accept the dictates of right and justice. In this social order, there is no place for dictators, capitalists or priests. They are all enemies of *dīn*.

13. *Madhhab* enjoins religious meditation in the name of worship and thus induces self-deception.

Dīn exhorts men to assert themselves and struggle perpetually for the establishment of the Divine Social Order, and its betterment when attained. *Worship* in *dīn* really means *obedience* to the Laws of God.

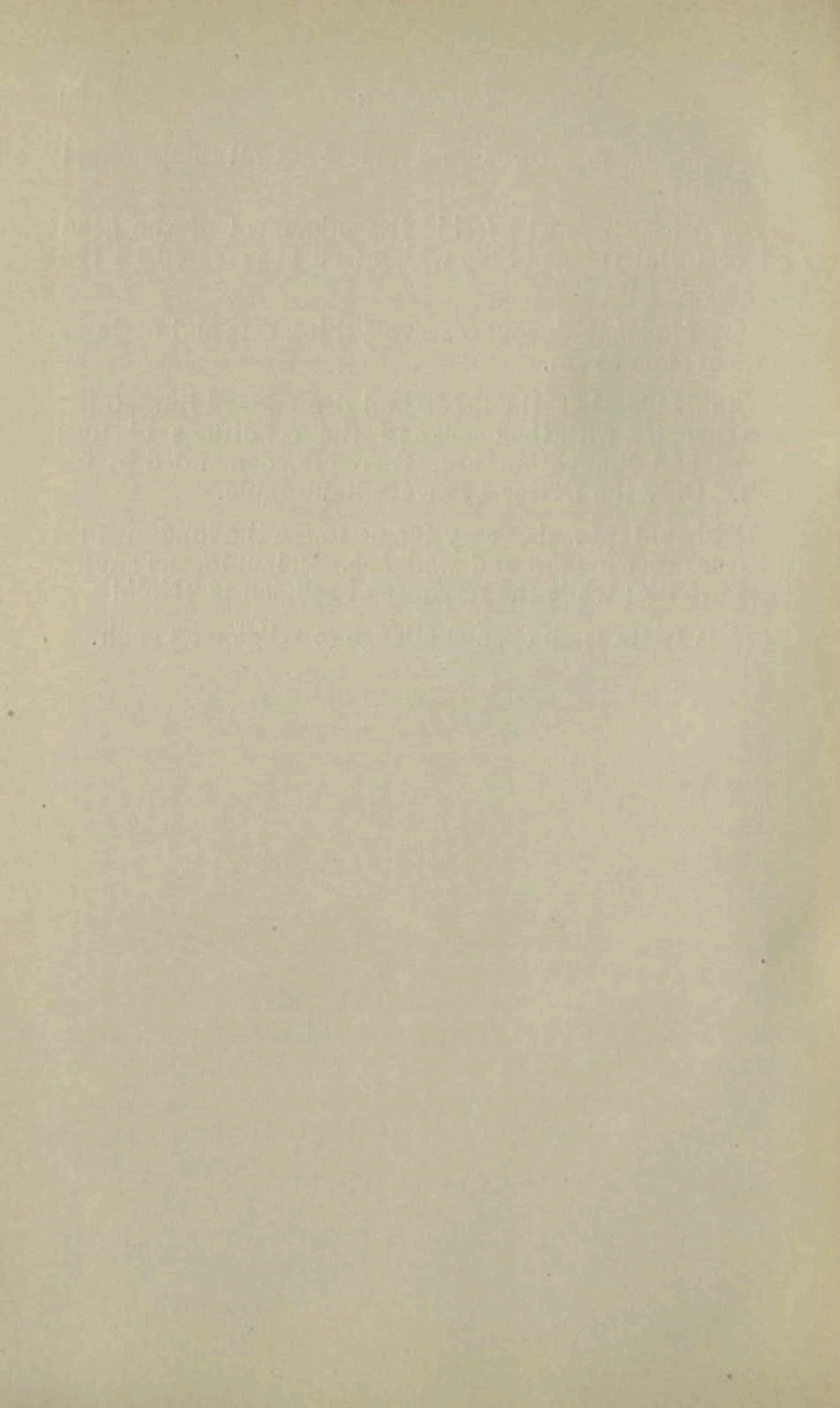
14. *Madhhab* frowns and sneers at all things of art and beauty.

Dīn defies those who forbid the enjoyment of the good and beautiful things of life which God has created for the enjoyment of man.

15. *Madhhab* denounces everything new and declares all innovation as sin.

Dīn holds that the needs and demands of human life keep changing with the change in the conditions of life; change and innovation are, therefore, demanded by life itself. Only the Divine Laws are immutable.

It should now be easy for us to see the fundamental difference between *dīn* and *madhhab*. Islam means saying "Yes" to life; while the response of religion is "No"!

Thus Islam is an open challenge to religion as such.

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common people and is influencing similar thinking in other countries. The central organ of this movement—the monthly "Tulū-e-Islam" (the Islamic Dawn)—is avidly studied at home and abroad. This voluminous encyclopaedic work of Mr. Parwez has gone on for the last thirty years, side by side with his official duties as a civil servant. Since his retirement from service, he has engaged himself entirely in the service of the movement. It was in this capacity that he worked as a member of the Islamic Laws Commission, appointed under the 1956 Constitution of Pakistan.

The present work, the first of this author to be written in English, as its name suggests, is a study of the basic character of Islam, not as a religion, as it has been hitherto designated, but as a challenge to and a protest against all religion, which is another name for the historical entity called priestcraft, and which finds no sanction anywhere in the Qur'ān. Islam is rather an enemy of priestcraft. The irony is that the tendency to priestcraft has slowly matured within Muslim society until it has taken hold of the entire area of Islamic belief and practice. Mr. Parwez's movement is one of the most vital forces in Muslim society which has taken the revolutionary stand of replacing once again, as in the beginning of Islam, the concept of religion by the concept which, in the terminology of the Qur'ān, is called *Dīn*. According to Mr. Parwez, Islam is not the name of individual subjective experience of a relationship with the Deity; it is essentially a "Code of Life" in accordance with which the existence of the individual as well as the collective can have a positive meaning and an un-interrupted evolution here-now and in the here-after. It is only on the basis of permanent values of Islam that humanity can hope to develop and emerge out of the welter of purely pragmatic and amoral philosophies of action working in a limited temporal scale, without the sheet anchor of a divinely inspired message, to provide them a total existential sanction. Much of the prevailing confusion in the world of today is not because of the advancement of scientific knowledge, but because of a negation of the permanence of human reality and its dependence on the concept of a God, Who is not only the Eternal Provider of sustenance and of knowledge, but also the Guide—through the agency of His Messenger—for the best and the most rational means of creating order in the human condition. Islam is thus not a private individual affair but a collective system, not a vehicle of personal salvation but of universal welfare, not an adversary of reason but a liberator of human reason, not a breeder of superstition but a radical challenge to all superstition, not a purveyor of fearful conformity but a creator in man of courage and self-reliance, not a call for renunciation of the concrete and the real but an invitation to conquer and subjugate the world of matter, not a supporter of the status quo and of the vested interests but a beacon light pointing in the direction of a total "revolt against all forms of tyranny and exploitation." It is, in short, a loud "YES" to life, and totally rejects the whimpering "NO" which religious priestcraft has used to shackle the divine potentialities created in Man by God. It is a challenge to religion.